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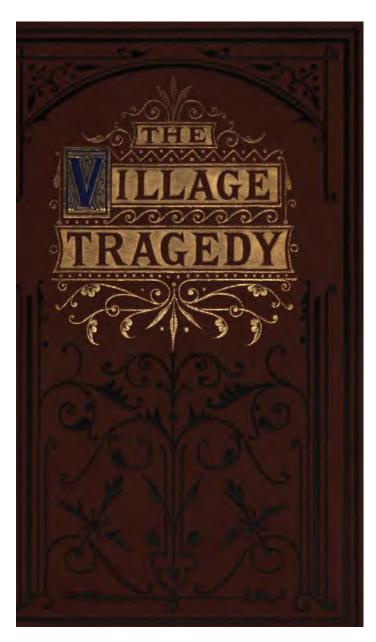
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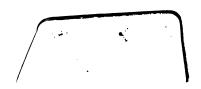
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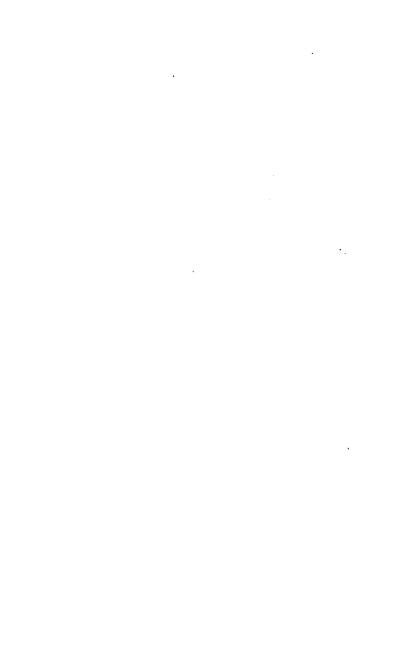
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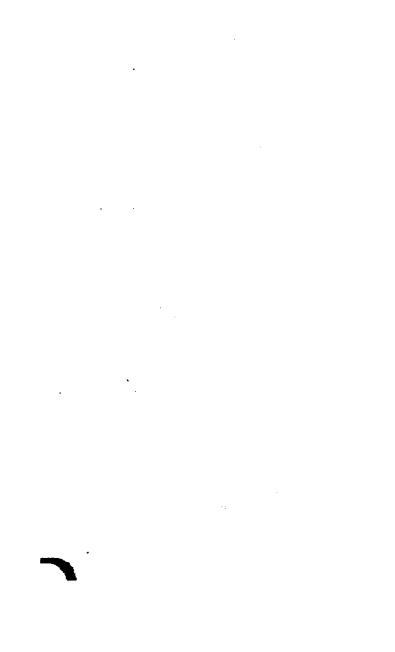
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# THE VILLAGE TRAGEDY;

OR,

ECHOES OF THE PAST—
A WARNING FOR THE PRESENT.

BY

### GEORGE DAVIES,

AUTHOR OF "SAVED AT LAST," ETC.

"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."—PROV. xxix. 1.

"SEEK for GLORY and HONOUR and IMMORTALILY, ETERNAL LIFE."—Rom. ii. 7.

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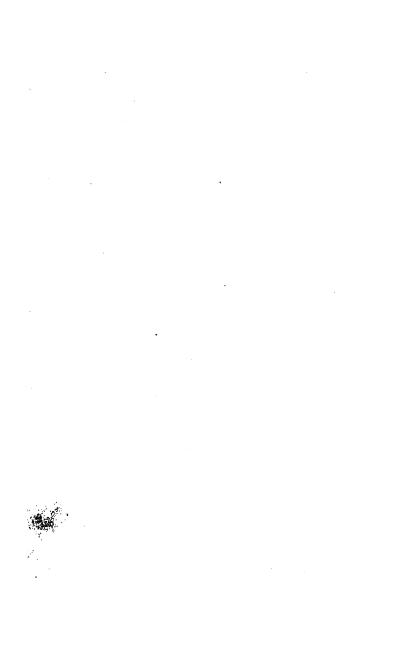
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### BIRMINGHAM:

W. G. PROVERBS, LADYWOOD STEAM PRINTING WORKS, LEDSAM-ST.

1878.

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### PREFACE.

NE day, turning over some papers kept in a private drawer, as if by accident 1 stumbled on a small slip, dingy in colour from smoke or age. This paper excited my curiosity. I took it up and examined it. It bore the signature of two persons, and related to a business transaction that had taken place more than twenty-five years before. This simple incident, without any interest to any but the parties concerned, caused me to exclaim, "A small loss! Thank God it is not a great one! What cause have I for thankfulness? What is a small pecuniary loss, when compared with the loss of character, Christian principle, the power of usefulness to others through a tarnished reputation; with the loss of life; nay it may be in some cases, for aught that mortals know, an irreparable loss, even the loss of the soul?" Out of this simple circumstance, the history of "The Village Tragedy," with its Reminiscences and Lessons, originated,

The facts and incidents came trooping up in my memory; the buried past appeared like a present reality. In relating the central fact of the story to a few friends, they urged me to write a tract on the subject, believing it would be useful as a warning to many who are standing in "slippery places," and in danger of falling into a similar snare.

In carrying into effect this request I have slightly disguised names of persons and places, to avoid giving pain to any who otherwise might have thought the references too pointed. With this explanation the book is a record of facts, set in their surroundings without any attempt to produce sensational effect. Hundreds of persons still living in the district will recognise the originals on reading the book.

The following from the Rev. C. SMALLMAN, Minister of the Circuit, corroborates this statement:—

"I have received your book 'The Village Tragedy,' and, because I knew the subject of your narrative, have read it with careful and painful

interest, and since reading the book have conversed with many who are still living in the locality where the incidents referred to took place, and amongst the number a brother minister who travelled in a neighbouring circuit at the time the sad calamity happened, all of whom have a vivid recollection of the events you have so graphically described. Consequently I am in a position to say whether your book contains fact or fiction, and I do hereby certify that it is a record of well attested facts strictly and substantially correct, and in my judgment it deserves a wide circulation, as it is well calculated to do immense service in the cause of Temperance and Religion. You have done a good work in rescuing from oblivion a life's history which has so many lessons to teach, and which also supplies so striking a warning against the frightful evils of intemperance, that prolific source of misery both to the Church and the world."

G. DAVIES.

Birmingham, 1878.

## CONTENTS.

	CHAI	PTER	I.			PAGE.
The Moral Test	•	-		-	-	9
	CHA	TER	II.			
Lights and Shado	ws of	Early	Life	e -	-	15
	CHAP	TER I	III.			
Social Changes ar	nd Mo	ral Re	eforn	atio	ıs -	24
	CHAP	TER	IV.			
Adoption of Rig	ght P	r <b>in</b> cip	les	to Fi	$_{ m ght}$	
the Foe -	-	-	-	-	-	32
	CHAI	PTER	V.			
Clear Skies and S	afe Sa	iling	-	-	-	40
•	CHAP	TER	VI.			
Popularity and U	sefuln	ess	-	-	-	47
	CHAP	TER V	VII.			
The Tempting O	ffer an	d the	Wr	ong S	tep	58
•	CHAP	rer v	III.			
The New Under	rtakin	g an	d it	s Mo	oral	
Problems	-	-	-	-	-	64

### vii.

CHAPTER IX. F	AGE.
	73
CHAPTER X.	
The Crisis	80
CHAPTER XI.	
Church Discipline	86
CHAPTER XII.	
The Last Sermon	92
CHAPTER XIII.	
•	99
CHAPTER XIV	
	105
CHAPTER XV.	•
	111
The Last Journey and the Midnight Revel	111
CHAPTER XVI.	
Home Picture; or, the Night of Agony -	122
CHAPTER XVII.	
Christian Sympathy	131
CHAPTER XVIII.	
Heavy Tidings	136
CHAPTER XIX.	
	139
The Tragic End	
The Tragic End CHAPTER XX.	2.70
CHAPTER XX.	

### viii.

CHAPTE	R XXI	I.		PAGE.
The Home Wrecked -	-	-		154
CHAPTER	XXII	II.		
The Only Child	-	-	-	160
CHAPTER	XXI	V.		
The Two Lives Contrasted	-	-	-	166
CHAPTE	R XXV	7.		
The Landlord's History -	-	-	-	174
CHAPTER	ı xxv	Ί.		
The Publican with an Un	easy (	Consc	ience	185
CHAPTER	xxv	II.		
Closing Reminiscences -	-	-	-	192





### CHAPTER I.

#### THE MORAL TEST.

hence warning and promise is given. "Be sober, be vigilant;—because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." "Whom resist steadfast in the faith." "And he will flee from you." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

These words remind us of our danger, give directions how the tempter is to be met, and hold out the crown of life as the high reward to those who are victorious in the fight.

If to be forewarned is to be forearmed, then none, who will give themselves the trouble to

read the Bible, need be unprepared for fighting the battle of life to a successful issue. For if examples are necessary to stimulate to noble effort, the Bible furnishes the brightest, safest, and best that can be found in the annals of the race; the motives are the purest, the end to be aimed at the loftiest, while the inducements are the strongest, that can ever attract and influence moral character in its upward and onward progress toward the goal of human perfection.

Were the precepts and principles of the Bible duly considered and acted on, every relationship of life would be ennobled and beautified; the Christian virtues would be deeply rooted in human character, and strife and discord would no more break the peace and harmony of society. Religion, the eternal law of righteousness, would be established; the wrecks and failures of life, which have so long marred and disfigured human society, would for ever be banished from the face of the earth, and the promise to the long-drawn sigh of human hope would be realized in the "New heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The Village Tragedy, with its reminiscences and lessons, is the subject we have undertaken

to narrate in these pages. In them we shall point out how a habit, once formed for the social glass, grew into a master passion, enfeebling the moral powers, stupifying the conscience, and exerting a despotic influence over the will, which held its unhappy victim in slavish and galling bondage to the dark and tragic end.

It is a life history we have to narrate, and that of a once dear and personal friend—a life of promise, usefulness, energy and enterprise; of success and failure; of victories and defeats; of calm and sunshine; of cloud and storm—a life which terminated under sad and sorrowful circumstances when manhood had no more than reached its prime. Although upwards of thirty years have passed since the sad event took place, the particulars are as fresh and as vividly before our mind, as though they were but of yesterday's occurrence.

This life was not lived in a great city, amidst the noise and roar of commercial activities, nor was it exposed to the glare and exciting influences of the ten thousand snares and temptations which surround and allure to ruin and death those whose lot is cast in the order of Providence, "to do or die" in the great centres of national life. For it is not only in great cities that character is in danger, and that men sail over a stormy sea where the terrible breakers roar, and crush in treacherous eddies and whirlpools of sin's enchanting power, and engulph in ruin some of the brightest geniuses on whom a Church and a nation's fondest hopes are placed, but changes and perils beset men in the quiet village, in the rural districts, in nature's loneliest retreats, where every surrounding object speaks to the mind and heart of an Omnipotent Being greater than the works of nature by which we are surrounded, and which should fill the mind with wonder and awe.

- "Lift to the firmament your eye,
  Thither his path pursue;
  His glory, boundless as the sky,
  O'erwhelms the wondering view.
- "The forests in His strength rejoice: Hark! on the evening breeze, As once of old, the Lord God's voice Is heard among the trees.
- "In every stream His bounty flows, Diffusing joy and wealth; In every breeze His spirit blows, The breath of life and health."

Such is the voice of nature to the listening ear, the seeing eye, and thoughtful mind, and yet the danger is nigh. For until man shall invent some method to get away from himself-that is, to separate himself from himself, the temptation will be near. It is not only in the outward circumstances and conditions of life, but also in man, that the danger is to be found, and to be overcome. We forget not that the beauties and glories of Paradise were no proof of human nature being free from temptation, or of its power to hold its own against such subtle influences as man then felt, nor did the dreariness and solitariness of the wilderness, nay more, nor did the purity of the Saviour's life, shield him from the tempter's vile assaults. Though in his case the tempter was foiled, and had to beat a retreat; thus furnishing an example, and teaching a lesson for all time to tempted ones, showing how they also may vanquish the tempter, by prayer, and through faith in Him who said, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

It is in the country village and the rural district, amidst the beauties of nature and the surroundings of rustic life, that we are to trace the life history and struggles of the subject of this narrative. But we here remark that, out of consideration for relatives or friends who may yet survive, the real names of persons and places are withheld. Yet the reader may rest assured that all the particulars given are facts, gathering round a real life history, and in no single ininstance overstated or used for sensational purpose; but written in the hope that the narrative may warn others of the danger and peril of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. If this object should be accomplished, the reader will not have read in vain, nor will the writer have cause to regret that he transferred from his memory the facts and incidents relating to the village tragedy to the pages of this book.





### CHAPTER II.

#### LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF EARLY LIFE.

UR friend was born in a country district, far away from the bustle and activities of town or city life, in a small and straggling village, the district around having only a sparse and scattered population. It was in the county of Shropshire, verging on the borders of Wales. The situation was alike beautiful for the picturesqueness and variety of its scenery, as well as for the richness, fertility, and productiveness of the soil. And if nature manufactured, in the ages of old, her precious metals, and laid up in store her vast resources of minerals and coal for the present and future ages, the hills and valleys of this district have yet to yield their hidden treasures, for neither owners of estates nor speculative capitalists have blasted the rocks, or bored into the valleys after these precious deposits, the finding of which would confer an unspeakable boon on the country around.

In the locality the antiquarian may find a few objects of interest, well worthy the labour of research, for, buried in the midst of the surrounding hills, there exists a church in a wonderful state of preservation, of greater antiquity than the Norman conquest, which suffered terribly, and narrowly escaped total destruction in the civil wars, by Fleetwood, one of Oliver Cromwell's generals. Part of the walls and foundation of an old castle can still be traced, where Welsh and English often strove for the mastery, and which was held alternately by the stronger party.

Yet more remote in history, and still more interesting, are the spot and hill where the British hero, *Caractacus*, made his final effort to withstand the onslaught of the Roman invaders. The camp and trenches remain to this day, reminding us of the indomitable endurance and valour of our ancestors, and also of the history and progress of our nation.

Over these interesting hills and valleys we have watched the careering thunder-storm, and

gazed on the floating clouds sailing in majesty, casting their deep shadows on the landscape below, and lining out the direction of their airy course. We have seen the sun bursting in splendour through the gloom, chasing away the shadows, lighting up and transforming the scene into an earthly paradise. And this has been to our mind a true picture of the lights and shadows of human life, painted day by day by the Great Artist, and set before our eyes to teach us the lesson that life has its sorrows as well as its joys, wherever our lot may be cast, or whatever our condition in life may be.

Down the valley by the side of the village runs the ancient river after which the town near its source is named, and, by compounding the simple noun into a word of three or four syllables, you get the names of all the villages and hamlets in the district through which the river wends its course. On the side of this river stand several flour mills, science having utilized the stream as motive power to set the machinery in motion to grind the corn sent to the mills. For in this part of the country a wind-mill is unknown, while in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire wind-mills are conspicuous objects, meeting the eye of the traveller in every direction. This small river, from a dateless past, has flowed on through all seasons, fertilizing and refreshing the district through which it takes its course—faint image of the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," giving life and cleansing to a perishing world.

We have described the village and the locality where our friend was born; let us proceed with the narrative. His parents rented a small farm. and by industry and economy managed to pay their way and rear their family in comfort and respectability for their station in life. A slight education was all that a small farmer could hope to give to his children, for schools were few and far between at that time and in that part of the country; besides, boys and girls had to be at work earning their living at an early age. Things have altered for the better since the time our friend was a school boy. Early in life, death deprived him of a father's care and guidance. and shortly after his mother changed her farm for a beer-house, which proved a bad school for her son, as well as for the young people of the village. Though his mother kept the village

tavern, and sold home-brewed ale to her customers, she made it a point of duty to walk a long distance to a little Methodist chapel on the Sundays, and to take her son, her "only son," with her. At one time it was thought that some serious impression had been made upon his mind, and that he would approach manhood as a sober and intelligent young man, the joy and pride of a mother's heart. But these hopes and expectations were not realized; his goodness was "as a morning cloud, and, as the early dew," it soon vanished away. His home life in the tap-room, and his naturally strong will and impulsive nature, soon smothered the glimmering spark of hope lighted up at the little village Bethel.

For a foster-father he had an old soldier, who had been through the Peninsular war, and who fought in the ever memorable battle of Waterloo. The village tap-room was a congenial home for such a nature, and there was no wonder that he should make choice of such a place to board and lodge. His pension found him in tobacco and beer, and for food and clothing he applied himself to shoe mending at times, but the principal source of revenue on which he relied was the manufacture of walking-sticks, for which he had

acquired a great reputation; and deservedly so, for none could justly deny to him the merit that he had succeeded, in a wonderful degree, in combining the ornamental with the useful in the article he produced, specimens of which were to be found in almost every house for miles around, and which were exhibited to strangers as a great curiosity, and not unfrequently sent as presents to friends at a distance. On these famous walking sticks three snakes were carved, a fac-simile of the reptiles found in the woods and hedgerows of the neighbourhood, of which the people had a superstitious dread. The tail point commenced at the taper end of the stick, and the coiling of the body around it to the top gave a full length representation, with the heads and stings finely carved at the top end of the stick, making an artistic finish. The spots also on the skin, with the shade and colour of the reptile, were produced with good effect, and the finished article was a good representation of the real in nature; which made it not difficult to imagine that snakes could be utilized and brought into hand to journey with you as pleasant companions, and helpful friends, thus giving the idea that the obnoxious creature was more friendly and useful, and less

harmful than common prejudice had represented. For ought we know the reptile tribe might feel themselves under an obligation to the old soldier for familiarising the public with the good services they may, in the shape of a walking-stick, render to man.

The price of the stick, like other articles of commerce, was regulated by the quality and quantity of work put on; for some of his highly-finished work five shillings was considered a reasonable charge, white an inferior article, for the general public, could be produced at a much cheaper rate. Under special circumstances, when he was hard up and his credit bad, no reasonable offer This was no unusual experience was refused. with the old pensioner, for he often found himself in financial difficulties. This would happen between the quarterly pay days, which he looked upon as too few and too far between; for when they came the pension had been so heavily mortgaged that it was nearly all condemned before it was received. This condition of things was owing to intemperate habits, habits contracted in early life, and never mastered—a life which had disregarded the wise maxim of taking thought for the morrow. This was the old soldier's weakness, and applies to a great many besides old pensioners; if it did not, a better and happier condition of things would exist. Though the old soldier had his failings, some of which we have pointed out, yet he possessed a kind and generous heart, was thoroughly unselfish, and while the money lasted it was all but open house. Nothing gave him greater pleasure on these special occasions than to interest his friends by favouring them with a full and detailed account of his life when a soldier, of the several battles in which he had been engaged, of the hardships he had endured, the dangers to which he had been exposed, and the victories which their great commander—the Iron Duke—had won. The old soldier had seen much of life, had a retentive memory, as well as power to describe with telling effect what he had seen, which made his company instructive as well as interesting. But, on the subject of religion, he was painfully indifferent—he professed to know nothing about it, nor to care anything; military law and discipline was the only supreme power he acknowledged. Had he received orders to fight the devil and evil spirits from that fountain of authority he would have obeyed that order, but no other.

This sketch of the old soldier's character is given for the purpose of enabling the reader to judge of the kind of influence which surrounded the subject of this narrative, when his character was forming, and his nature most susceptible of impressions—the lights and shadows which fell on it in the most critical period of his life.

It is now a quarter of a century and upwards since the old pensioner followed his companions in arms who had passed before him to the muster roll in the other world, and of his contemporaries there can but few remain in the village, while of the younger race, since grown up, their recollection of him cannot be otherwise than shadowy and traditional; but traces of his ingenuity still exist, and are to be found in his famous walkingsticks, and will be handed down to a coming generation as an object of interest, as well as a relic of curiosity.





### CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL CHANGES AND MORAL REFORMATIONS.

ONSIDERING the associations by which the youth and early manhood of our friend had been surrounded, nothing of a bright and hopeful future could be looked for, especially if we apply the old maxim: "That a man's character will be judged by the company he keeps." For let it be observed, he continued to sow his wild oats into the summer season of manhood. But what if he did? Are there not those who look charitably on the follies and vices of youth, and consider them as indications of a bold and dashing spirit, rather than to the absence of a virtuous disposition? Yet whatever sentimental notions may be entertained on this subject, we hold this to be a matter of fact, there is no reversing the universal law that reigns supreme through all realms: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Our friend had gone down the long lane, and at last had come to the happy turn. But this change in his character and prospects for life was effected by an attachment formed for a young woman of excellent character, good family connection, and of prospects of a marriage portion, if her friends approved of her choice. But such matters are not in all cases submitted to the tastes and decisions of friends. Advice offered from the most disinterested motive, is often resented as an unwarrantable interference with individual rights; and the parties to whom it is tendered often become more determined to carry out their own pet scheme for future happiness or misery. "I will not have my cheese toasted," said a master to his plough boy, who had half-a-pound of "skim dick" stuck at the end of a toasting fork before the fire, as his master entered the kitchen one morning. "'Tisn't for you, master, this bit is for myself," was the plough-boy's dry reply. And so in the case of young people in choice of their companions for life; when friends interfere, and disapprove of the choice, the reply made in effect is, "'Tisn't for you, master, this bit is for myself." Though in many cases the time comes when there are abundant reasons to regret that the advice of friends was not listened to and acted on. In this particular case the friends on the female side did not interfere, as she was the senior in years of him to whom she was engaged, and with whom she was willing to stake her earthly happiness. In her, our friend found "a treasure beyond all price—one that looked well to the ways of her household, and that did not eat the bread of idleness."

Entering on this new relationship in life, with a real helpmate for a partner, he determined, by economy and industry, together with the small marriage portion on each side, to push his way through, and reach a position of respectability and independence. They began married life in a small, but neat cottage; soon, however, the cottage was exchanged for a farm, which swallowed up their little capital in purchasing implements of husbandry and stock; but small farms, like small capital, when wisely managed, often grow into larger ones. And we think our friend was ambitious enough to look forward to the time when he should be found amongst the

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largest farmers in the district, as he could point to one or two, who, like himself, had commenced with a very small taking, and now were the great men of the parish. Being started in life with fair and reasonable prospects of success, and sobered down from his former wild career, a new object of joy and interest was given to brighten and sweeten the charms of married life, as well as to weight it with additional duties and responsibilities. This was the birth of a daughter, and the only child permitted to live; and she lived to witness her father's chequered history, his sad fall through drink, and his sun to set under a cloud of fearful darkness, ere he reached the meridian of life.

For a time our friend had fair sailing, life presenting few changes, except an hitch now and again, when the craving for drink fought with moral principles for the mastery. And here we have to notice an event which invests our subject with deep and thrilling interest to the end of our narrative.

A young man, following the calling of a carpenter, came to work at his trade, and reside in the village: This young man had fixed principles in religion, and in the part of the

country where he came from had exercised the functions of a Methodist Local Preacher. now he was amongst strangers, and in a locality where a decidedly religious man, and especially a Local Preacher, would be looked upon as a singularly strange phenomenon. He saw clearly that he had the choice of one of two things before him: -either to stand up boldly for his principles, or strike his colours, and bring himself down to the low moral condition of things which existed around. Without conferring with flesh and blood, he wisely decided to stand to his principles, and to avail himself of every opportunity of doing good, and of preaching the gospel in the village and neighbourhood To those who make up their mind to around. work, and are willing, they have not long to wait for the opportunity. On week evenings, after his work was done, as also on Sundays, he was found in the cottage or on the village green preaching Jesus to the people, and His great salvation: and urging his hearers to attend to the things which belong to everlasting peace. These efforts were owned of God, and crowned with a large measure of success. A general awakening took place, which extended in the range of its

influence for miles around, and multitudes were aroused from spiritual slumber, and, like the jailer, anxiously enquired, "What must we do to be saved?"

Amongst the number brought out of the world and enrolled in Church fellowship, was our friend and his excellent wife. Their conversion and adhesion to the infant Church was looked upon as an important event, considering their social position. It gave strength and importance to the new movement, and caused many to look more favourably on it than otherwise would have been the case if their station in life had been less influential amongst the villagers.

Our friend, having a warm heart, and being of a sanguine and excitable temperament, went into this new religious movement with great zeal and earnestness. His house was open to preachers from all quarters, and under his hospitable roof they found a home and a hearty welcome, which was refreshing to them in their long and toilsome journeys which they had to make, as the facilities for travelling did not exist then as they do now.

In time our friend's zeal and earnest desire to

do good, combined with consistency of character since his moral change, led the officials of the Church with which he was identified, to place his name on the preachers' plan, and to give him appointments at some of the stations in the Circuit recently formed from the village revival.

For this work he made careful preparation, and soon became a great favourite at all the places where he had appointments. "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," were the true maxims which he set before himself as embodying right principles for his guidance in all the varied relationships of life. And he found, while acting on these principles, that he was a useful and happy man. time he continued stedfast, and his influence, usefulness and popularity, extended to the remotest stations in the wide and scattered Circuit. His conversion was looked upon "as of one born out of due time;" for having, previous to his marriage and moral change, gone into great depths of sin, he was considered by many as a confirmed drunkard.

His change having been so sudden, and marked with such warmth and zeal in his altered life, made him a wonder unto many, and caused crowds out of mere curiosity to flock to see and hear him preach. This excitement and popularity were not without their perils to such a warm and generous nature as his, for he was open-handed as well as open-hearted; social and genial to all with whom he came into contact. These qualities he possessed to a fault. He often met with his old companions in his preaching tours, as he moved through the district from one locality to another, and the customs and civilities which existed at that time in those places, consisted in drinking together the social glass.

These customs not unfrequently proved a snare and a temptation to our friend, and on several occasions imperilled his Christian character, and fed the old appetite, so that the danger of relapse was a subject of serious and prayerful consideration among his friends, and to none more than to the young man who had been instrumental in bringing him under the renewing influences of which he had now been the subject for a considerable time.



## CHAPTER IV.

# ADOPTION OF RIGHT PRINCIPLES TO > FIGHT THE FOE.

\*\*E did run well!" This language of commendation was not inapplicable to the subject of this narrative, during the first part of his reformed life, as the reader will have seen, when he went forth to the discharge of the varied duties of life, under the strong impulse of the first kindling of a heaven-born love. This new inspiration filled his soul with joy and peace, and quickened into life energies and powers which before had lain dormant; powers and possibilities of which he had been unconscious before his moral and spiritual awakening. But in this change his old enemy was not destroyed, he was beaten and foiled for a time, it is true, but he lived on to renew the fight, with a resolute purpose, ever watchful

and ever ready to seize on the opportunity for re-capturing his former victim as his prey, who, with more or less success, had been battling against a subtle and dangerous foe. Nor were his friends without their misgivings and anxiety for his "continuance in well doing." They well knew his infirmity, and the flexibility of a nature like his, to yield under the pressure of temptation to his old besetting sin. Nor were these fears and anxieties altogether groundless, for the air was filled with rumours that on several occasions his stumbling and weakness had been too conspicuous to be denied.

"Breakers ahead!" were clearly descried by friend and foe, which made it clear to his friends that something must be done to prevent a relapse, if possible. For a break down they knew would be sure to inflict a severe blow on the good cause with which he stood identified. For what sympathy has a cold and selfish world with the objects and aims of Christians, in their endeavours to rescue the perishing from their misery, and in extending the kingdom of peace and righteousness among their fellow men? Indeed the fall of our friend would have been to some a satisfaction more than a grief; because

their credit as prophets were at stake. For in the judgment of such, his conversion was doubtful, and his popularity one of the seven days' wonders that ever and anon takes place, and soon comes to an end. It was their belief that his old enemy would fall on him in his strength, saying: "I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Terrible in imagination is the bare possibility of such a condition as referred to, but not more terrible than is the reality, which is not unfrequently met with in actual life.

Now how to prevent a possibility from becoming a probability, was the question his friends and the society had to solve. "In the multitude of counsellors," the maxim goes "there is safety." Many suggestions were made by "friends in council," which, by the proposers, were considered all important, and likely to meet the peculiarities of the case; but in the judgment of the young man before mentioned, who had

made the whole question, a deep and prayerful study, these recommendations were mere palliatives, not in any way calculated to reach the root of the evil. He had been reasoning in his own mind on cause and effect, and his friends had been reasoning on effect only, and left out the mighty factor cause, which produces effect. Therefore their conclusions were widely different. To his mind it was clear that if the cause that produces the effect could be removed, the effect, as a matter of fact, would cease. Such reasoning is admitted as sound in theory by most people. but when you seek to make a practical application of the principle, then there is a strong marshalling of objections and special pleadings against it. At least, our young friend found it so in this particular case. And not much wonder, for his idea of dealing with the difficulty was as novel as it was original. it must not be forgotten that it took a long time for an idea to fight its way from—Preston. through the country. And there is no reason to think that he had ever heard the name of the now world-renowned Joseph Livesey and his Tectotal Movement. Be that as it may, this was the idea that had lodged itself in his mind; but the mentioning of such an idea to the wiseacres in the village, and even to his own particular friends, brought upon him the severest censure. And in their united judgment he was looked upon as a fit subject for a lunatic asylum, while the proposed remedy in its application was pronounced to be worse than the evil requiring a cure. " Total and entire abstinence from all intoxicating drinks," was the remedy he proposed, and the friends to whom he spoke his mind on the subject indignantly replied, "Who ever heard of such a thing? This strange doctrine must be what Paul spoke of as the doctrine of devils. What a monstrous proposition! to abstain from the good creatures which God has given to us to be received by all with thankfulness. And besides, if we countenance this wild superstitious nonsense, what is to become of the country? How are our fields to be cultivated? Who can reap and mow and plough and sow, and cut down our corn, or gather the harvest into our barns without the home-brewed harvest beer? Such wild fanatical notions as these shall receive no sanction from us, whether we belong to the world or the Church. In this respect we are agreed: That we will continue in the good old customs of our forefathers, who would as soon have thought of cutting off their right arm as giving up their home-brewed ale. And we will be true sons of worthy sires. And let the young wiseacre know that he must go elsewhere to find hearers to preach his tectotal nostrums to, and not to us."

Without sympathy from others, our friend had the courage to follow out his conviction, notwithstanding the storm of opposition that his suggestion had brought upon him, and the predicted calamities which were to follow on the adoption of such views. To save a brother from falling was to him the chief thing, for which he was prepared to make any reasonable amount of sacrifice, if the end so much to be desired could but be gained. Receiving no encouragement from his co-religionists, he was put down by them as one that had a "room to let" in the top storey. Standing alone in this moral conflict, he had the inward support which he needed, and which was to him a tower of strength, "the testimony of a good conscience," and faith, also, that his appeal to his brother would be crowned with success. And to make success doubly sure, he proposed to his friend that they should both pledge themselves as "TEETOTALLERS," their word and honour being their bond to abstain from all intoxicating drinks. This was the teaching of example as well as of precept.

The proposal at first nearly took his friend's breath away; but on further consideration of the matter, and sitting down and counting the cost, the *Pledge* was taken, the word of honour given, and two men were thus found in the village to prove that existence was possible without taking intoxicating drinks; that the sun would rise and set, and the seasons follow in succession, and the laws of nature continue the same; in fact that all the duties and obligations of life could be discharged with fidelity and honour, though two men had committed, not only in the judgment of the ignorant and superstitious, but of the religious also, the "unpardonable sin," by becoming *Teetotallers*.

Let none think this picture is extravagantly drawn; for in the time referred to, the reader must remember that *Total Abstainers* had to contend for their principles against persecutions as fierce, and oppositions as organized as the followers of John Wesley had for theirs in

his day. For is it not a well known fact to all versed in the history of Methodism, that bigotry and superstition were combined in raising formidable opposition to prevent the spread of Wesley's doctrines among the people. And were there not those who believed that terrible calamities would fall on the nation as a judgment from heaven, as a proof of Divine disapprobation for allowing such heretical notions to be propagated amongst the people?

How appropriate must have been the following verses in such times:—

"The love of Christ doth me constrain
To seek the wandering souls of men:
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave.

"For this let men revile my name;
No cross I shun, I fear no shame;
All hail, reproach! and welcome pain!
Only Thy terrors, Lord, restrain."





## CHAPTER V.

### CLEAR SKIES AND SAFE SAILING.

E have to remember that our friend had boldly taken his stand on the temperance pledge, and now we find him "giving all diligence to add to his faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance." Nor did he neglect to cultivate other Christian graces, though it is likely at this time he gave to temperance the pre-eminence. At this we cannot wonder, for he, like many others, had found out by bitter experience the sad consequences of not giving heed before time to the inspired admonition of "adding to his knowledge temperance." This was the kind of ballast he wanted to keep his vessel from pitching and rolling, and toppling over. With this he found he could drive against strong head

winds, and navigate rough and dangerous seas, in perfect assurance of safety-a striking contrast to his former condition of tormenting doubts and fears. Abstinence from all intoxicating drinks was the fortifying of the weak side of his nature against any sudden attack of his old implacable enemy; the "laying aside the weight and the besetting sin," was the right preparation for running the race and winning the prize of a useful and honourable life. Having entrenched himself in a strong position, and hoisted his flag with temperance inscribed on it as his motto for future guidance and action, and with a resolute purpose of standing boldly by his principles, who can doubt that he felt a wiser, stronger, and happier man? And we assert there are but few to be found, that will not readily admit, that, as a leader and guide to others, the example thus set is safe to follow, and is in harmony with Christian teaching.

It will be seen that he had no wish to conceal his principles, or to hide his teetotal light under a bushel. The news spread like wild fire through the length and breadth of the circuit, that he had adopted some new fangled notions and strange principles for the greater security of his Christian character. To his peculiar notions and principles his friends had no objections to make, so long as he kept them to himself; for they were willing to admit the stern logic of fact, that as long as he abstained from taking intoxicating drinks, it was a physical impossibility for him to become a drunkard, and thus plough the crooked furrow, as had been the case in our friend's history previous to his signing the pledge. His friends had come to the conclusion to let things take their course, applying to the case the old text. "That a tree is known by its fruit." And so far they could see that the fruit was good; that old things had passed away and all things were become new. Perhaps the cause of wonderment was more in the name given to the thing, than in the thing itself. Teetotaller! Teetotalism! whatever can it be? or what can it mean? was the enquiry raised on all hands at the commencement of the temperance movement. And the strangeness of the name served as an excellent advertisement to the first advocates of the infant cause. was so in the experience of our friend. Whereever he was appointed, crowds out of curiosity gathered round him, so that they might see what strange kind of creature a teetotaller could be. Whether he was amphibious, capable of living on land or in water; or whether he belonged to this planet or some other; whether a human being like unto other mortals, or some undefinable thing that could not be classified with any of the known species of the present or past creations. We are writing of events which of course took place before the French traveller discovered a gorilla, and traced back the dignity of man's origin to that species. If the discovery of this relationship should fail to enhance our views of self-esteem, it must awaken our curiosity to watch and wait for the developing process up to the human standard; for when that takes place we shall be prepared to say to brother gorilla, "Hail, fellow, well met."

Our friend did not fail to turn the awakened curiosity to good account, for the benefit of his hearers, and for the furtherance of sound teaching, both on the question of temperance and religion. It was at this time that he began to make full proof of his ministry; for his earnestness and zeal gathered around him a host of new and attached friends at most of the places which he visited. His character shone out with

increasing lustre, and his influence for good was extending through the circuit; while his reputation as a powerful and acceptable preacher was acknowledged to be equal to any of his brethren on the plan. All this had been accomplished by his conscientious adherence to his temperance principles. The lost confidence of his friends was restored, and his waning influence came back like a spring tide, on which he could launch his bark and sail to wider fields of usefulness.

It was not in his nature to dream away life. He was of an active and energetic turn of mind; had a strong will, which was moved by impulse more than by sound judgment and clear reasoning. His nature was hot and excitable, but forgiving and generous to a fault. He possessed a bodily frame sturdy and strong, resembling the English Oak, which stands all weathers, and lives in defiance of tempest and storm. No wonder that possessing such a nature he should belong to that class which prefer wearing out to rusting out. He was now in the prime and vigour of manhood, and his steady and consistent conduct had gained him many friends; his reputation was rising, his course was clear

through the circuit for doing much good; while neighbour and friend could look up to him as a counsellor and guide. He warmly seconded every effort and enterprise that was considered feasible by his brethren for the extension of the gospel in the country places and villages where no means of grace existed, and he was always ready to assist in opening up fresh preaching stations, and for reclaiming the outlying territories from irreligion and vice. was one who never complained that he had too many appointments allotted to him as his share on the plan; or that the distances he had to travel to the appointments were too great; or the place not of sufficient importance to require his attendance. Christian work with him was regarded as a solemn and sacred duty in which he found great joy and satisfaction in his own mind; and he never allowed anything to interfere so as to prevent him fulfilling his appointments on the plan. There was no chopping and changing in his case as with some preachers, with the view of doing less work or shirking duty, from the low motive of having short journeys or snug appointments in the best chapels or to the largest congregation. His

punctuality in attending the appointments, the fervour of his spirit, and the unction attending his ministration, always secured him a full congregation, and made his visits a joy in anticipation as well as profitable and pleasant in remembrance.

With what pleasure and satisfaction must this career of usefulness and stability of character have been watched by the young man who had come to his rescue, and acted on the principle of self-denial for the sake of a weaker brother, whose character and prospects in life were at one time in great and eminent peril by a growing desire for indulgence in intoxicating drinks. Verily to him it must have been a present, as well as "a full reward." For "let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."





## CHAPTER VI.

#### POPULARITY AND USEFULNESS.

UR friend's social position and standing in society contributed largely to his popularity and influence as a public man. That is, when we contrast his social status with most of the members of the Church, or of the preachers whose names stood on the plan. the early days of the Connexion, the difficulties to be surmounted were great, while the persecutions hurled at the preachers and friends of the good cause, by the enemies of religion, were such as seem incredible to those who live in large towns, and enjoy the benefits of civil and religious liberty, without the pains and penalties of persecution. With our Primitive Methodist friends in the country, it was far otherwise in the beginning of their history. For those who became followers of 'the sect which was every-

where evilly spoken of,' acted wisely in first counting the cost, which in some cases was nothing less than the displeasure of the lord of the soil, on whose pleasure and will their bread Nor with the lord of the soil alone did the question of liberty of conscience rest; the country squire, the estate agent, the worldlyminded and pleasure-loving parson, were parties who had to be consulted, as well as the great lords. And those who made up their minds to be free, and not slaves; to be loyal to truth, regardless of the consequences, must stand prepared to receive notice to give up their farms and home-steads on which they and their forefathers had lived, it may be, for generations; the labourer to be turned out of his cottage at short notice and sent adrift; the tradesman to lose the patronage of his neighbours; the honest labourer his employment; and even old Betty, the charwoman, and the domestic servants, had all to pay a price for liberty of conscience, and for the privilege of worshipping God according to the teaching of truth and of their honest convictions. What wonder if under such circumstances "not many wise men after the flesh. not many noble," were found in the ranks of the

Primitive Methodists, if such a price had to be paid for the honour of discipleship? But what a guarantee for the genuineness of the metal when the ore had passed through such a process in the smelting! Or to change the figure, what General need fear leading such troops into battle, or be doubtful of victory with an army, every man of which had gone through such a baptism of fire?

If the reader will bear in mind the facts stated relative to the spirit of the times, when the first preachers missioned this particular district, with the view of establishing religious societies in the villages, hamlets, and country towns, he will be better able to understand the difficulties which had to be surmounted, and the obstacles raised by the parties referred to, viz.: to those persons who considered their will law, and that they held special functions to annoy and persecute all who were courageous enough to think for themselves on the question of religion and politics. Under such circumstances all kinds of material that came to hand had to be utilized, and turned to good account in building up a young and struggling cause; rough and unpolished stones were adjusted into proper places, as well as the squared and polished faced—for the 'walls had to be built in troublous times.' The Church was composed principally of the working classes, with a few rare exceptions, and might very justly be called "The Working Man's Church."

From its commencement to the present time it has held on its course rejoicing in the voluntary principles of self-support. Out of the roll of Church membership, local preachers had to be selected for the purpose of supplying the stations with preaching on Sundays, and sometimes on the week evenings. A glance at the preachers' plan will show a long list of names, as many as fifty, if not more; among which a sprinkling of the names of the gentler sex may be found-for a female preacher was no small attraction in those days; and even at the present there are a few who can draw crowded congregations to listen to the charm of their eloquence. In looking at the social status of this array of preaching talent and worthy men, there are to be found tailors, shoe-makers, hair-dressers, blacksmiths, carpenters, labourers, a freeholder, and one or two farmers. These all vying with each other, were anxious to be useful and ready to go forth any distance, through all kinds of weather, over all kinds of roads—sometimes ankle deep in mud—embracing every opportunity to tell of a Saviour's love. Nor were these earnest men particular as to the style of their dress; and as to the quality or colour, they were equally indifferent. Some went forth to do their Master's work in their corduroy and fustian, according to their station in life, not studying appearances; others in a clean white smock frock, quite clerical after a fashion; and often has the remark been made by the hearers, "That the mon in the smock frock had preached a better sermon than the parson in his gown."

It must be admitted that some of these worthy men were placed at a great disadvantage before their congregations; for some times they were terribly weather-beaten and exhausted from a ten to twenty miles journey, and had hard work to be in time for the service, because of the difficulties of travelling. But with the friend whose life we are narrating, it was far otherwise; he could dress up in his broad cloth, and put on the appearance of a gentleman, and ride to his appointments on his own hack. This exerted an influence in his favour through the

district over which he rode, as well as upon the people to whom he went to preach. Appearances and circumstances were in his favour, and contributed largely to his popularity and usefulness.

In another respect he had the advantage on his side over most of his fellow-workers. From the time of his conversion he had a thirst for knowledge, and laboured hard to obtain it, After he signed the pledge, he had means to purchase books, while he found time to read them and to study their contents. He also kept abreast with the questions of the day, and read himself up in the theological literature as it came from the press. With him it was a matter of conscience, as well as of duty, to have his subject well arranged, and thought out, and fixed on his own mind, with no small portion committed to memory. With such preparation, there was no wonder he was listened to with pleasure and profit by his country audiences, and looked upon as "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Some of his brethren on the plan had not such advantages as these; their early training

had been entirely neglected—unfortunately they had not received any education in their youth, nor had they the means of purchasing books, nor time on hand, or ability to read them. But these proved useful workers in the good cause after their conversion to God. They went forth in the full assurance that the gospel had effected a great change in their lives, and at any time in the face of difficulties they could fall back on their experience, like the man who was born blind that we read of in the gospel, and meet all their sceptical questioners with the stern "This one thing I know, that logic of fact: whereas I was blind, now I see." While their sterling piety and strong faith in God, coupled with their laborious and self-denying efforts to do good, was an equivalent, and more than an equivalent in some cases, for the deficiencies of book knowledge, which produces in some that flimsy stuff of parrot preaching, which is nothing better than the 'sounding brass and tinkling cymbals,'-a dead and soulless thing. the particulars stated the reader will be able to judge that we cannot be far wrong in looking upon our friend as the most popular preacher on the plan amongst the local brethren (of course

not including the females). And all must know the penalties of greatness, what a price there has to be paid for it. A full plan on Sunday in Circuit work, with applications pouring in from neighbouring Circuits to preach Charity or Anniversary Sermons; or to preach at the Opening and Re-opening of Chapels; preach Missionary Sermons; or to attend Missionary Meetings; to represent the society at some important gathering; or to stand forth as the able and eloquent speaker in advocating the claims of some Christian enterprise and philanthropic object. Such was the estimation in which his talents and services were held, not only by his personal friends, but through the Circuit around. Of course it was only to a tithe of these applications that he was able to respond; for as a prudent man he was bound to attend to the affairs of his own house; but his services were all freely given, and when given they were inspired by the constraining love of Christ. However great as a preacher and acceptable as a speaker, it was in the open air, and at the great Camp Meetings, that he was seen and heard to the greatest advantage. With a wagon for his pulpit, nature the temple, the surrounding hills for walls, and the arched heaven for a roof, and the listening multitudes for his congregations, these were the occasions on which he was in his glory, and when he delighted to revel in his strength, and to magnify his office as an ambassador of Christ in beseeching man to be reconciled to God.

At the Camp Meeting he was the right man in the right place. The announcement of his name as one of the preachers was a sufficient guarantee to secure a successful meeting, as to numbers and interest; and as for the meetings. in the localities in which they were held, they served the purpose of stirring the dull and stagnant waters of country life, for a time, at any rate; and often they produced impressions which ripened into lasting good. By nature our friend had inherited a strong and healthy constitution. He was powerfully built, and of average height; had a good open countenance. with a heavy forehead, indicating brain power: eyes through which you could read the passions which were working within when under the impulse of excitement; his voice was strong and penetrating; his eloquence was the gift of nature. rugged and fiery; words flowed at will, and rolled

over his audience like a tempest of fire, moving and shaking them like a field of corn or forest trees shook by the passing wind. Sometimes he would present the Saviour's love in strains of melting tenderness, and by entreaty and expostulation wield a mighty power over his audience; at other times, by the terrors of the Lord, he would persuade men to flee from the coming wrath. But his denunciation against the bold blasphemer and openly profane, were pictures graphically drawn of the despisers of salvation in the grip of death, and passing on to the doom of judgment and the fiery indignation of God's adversaries.

His gift and power in prayer at these Camp Meetings was even more marvellous than his preaching power. It was a blending of the awful and sublime. The careless and indifferent for a time, while he was engaged in prayer, appeared serious and devout, while the sincere Christians were borne to the gates of heaven on the wings of faith and prayer. Our description of the man and the Camp Meetings may be considered by some over drawn; but others, who are familiar with such meetings, and may have known the man, will bear testimony to the correctness of our sketch.

Our object in this chapter has been an attempt to give a true picture of our friend's popularity and usefulness in the best and brightest period of his life. And had he continued his useful course, the Shropshire farmer would have left a name behind him as fragrant in the Church as the famous Billy Dawson, the renowned Yorkshire farmer.

"Peace to the just man's memory; let it grow
Greener with years, and blossom through the flight
Of ages; let the mimic canvas show
His calm, benevolent features; let the light
Stream on his deeds of love, that shunned the sight
Of all but Heaven, and, in the book of fame,
The glorious record of his virtues write,
And hold it up to men, and bid them claim
A palm like his, and catch from him the hallowed flame."





## CHAPTER VII.

THE TEMPTING OFFER AND THE WRONG STEP.

HERE are persons to be met with who are in a great haste to get rich, regardless of consequences; and who are prepared to take any by-path as a shorter cut out of the old fashioned road of honourable integrity, to reach the goal of their ambition. To such we would commend, as a study, the following maxims of the wise:-"There is more haste than good speed." "Stay awhile to make an end the sooner." Or "slow, sure, and steady, is the pace that in the long run wins the race." And if among our readers there are those who are wise above what is written, they may yet find "a man may pay too dear for his whistle." scripture and experience are joined in warning those of their danger who go in neck or nothing

speed when running in the great "steeple chase," for the "sweepstakes" of the world. But such is the infatuation and moral madness that takes hold of the mind when these stakes are the prizes to be run for, that if accidents and broken necks had been multiplied ten-fold, such things would be looked upon as mere trifles, useless as warnings, and powerless as deterrents, in preventing fresh multitudes from rushing headlong to a similar fate. Such is the power of the world over the will, when it takes hold of a man, and he is led by it, that instead of being its master, and using it and not abusing it, he · becomes its slave. The divine command is, "to lay up treasure in heaven;" but how many there are who have more faith in laying up treasure on earth, and who give convincing proof by their conduct that their "soul cleaveth to the dust." and that the spirit of the world hath gained the ascendancy of their hearts, and that the moral order of things has been inverted, so far as their objects and aims of life are considered. With such a state let the following state of mind be contrasted :-

"Happy the man, without a wish for more,
Who quietly enjoys his little store;
And knows to heaven with gratitude to pay
Thanks for what's given, and for what's ta'en away."

It was under the bewitching influence an feverish excitement for worldly gain that ou friend was induced to enter himself as a competitor in the great steeple chase for the "sweepstakes" of the world. And this imprudent step brought down his spiritual temperatur from fever heat to zero at a stroke. Let u narrate the particulars, so that the reader may watch this moral eclipse, from the first falling of the shadows, in its progress through the different stages, till it passes into the darknes of a total eclipse.

In the same village there resided, at the time we are describing, a respectable tradesman the name of *Rich-Man*. He was a maltster and carried on a large and profitable trade, and had accumulated a handsome fortune. Now this person, long before he had reached the supposed limit of human life, was removed by death. He had no children to whom he could leave his business, and his widow having sufficient to live on, independent of the business

did not care to be harassed with it. And acting on the advice of her friends, the business was to be disposed of as a good and profitable going concern. Now this was a fine opportunity, and any man with an eye to business would not be likely to let it slip. Mrs. Rich-Man sent for Mr. Berry, her neighbour, and informed him as to her intention, and made him the offer of the whole concern on the most reasonable terms; advising him to think the matter over with his friends, and let her know the decision by a given time; promising him that she would treat with no one else till she heard from him and received his decision; intimating that she preferred old friends to strangers.

Such was the tempting offer placed before our friend, and we are sorry to say that on his part he was only too eager to embrace it; little thinking at the time what a harvest of misery was in store, as the bitter consequences of such an imprudent step. Having the opportunity fairly before him, and knowing that the deceased tradesman and neighbour had saved a sum of money which would justify his widow in giving up the trade, and of retiring into private life, it made the offer appear to him as one of those

favourable events or godsends which occur perhaps but once in a lifetime. On the fact becoming known to his friends that it was not unlikely he would take to this malting business, they did their best to dissuade him from entertaining the idea, by placing before him weighty reasons and strong arguments, showing why he should have nothing to do with a trade fraught with so many temptations and dangers, and which might imperil his interests for time and eternity; and as he was a teetotaller, and a preacher of the gospel, they gave it as their judgment that consistency alone ought to settle the question, and that of all men on the earth he should be the last to think of such a trade. Had he listened to their advice, the project would have been abandoned at once. But our friend had generosity of mind enough to put a favourable construction on the motives which prompted his friends to bring their influence to help him to come to a decision according to their own wishes. But he had a will of his own, and he would not allow any outside influence to interfere with his own plans and purposes. He considered that his friends had formed a wrong estimate of the strength of his moral power to

resist the temptations which they thought he would be exposed to. And he considered that some of their reasonings and arguments were too puritanical and restrictive in their nature and application for these days of business and commercial life, and especially as duties become more varied with the progress and enlightenment of the age. The fact was, his conscience had got a twist, and had become very elastic, and could easily adapt itself to a new set of circumstances. His motto now was, "to get on in the world, and leave the old jogtrot principles to the antiquated folks that were a century behind the age in which they lived." Mr. Rich-Man had saved a fortune in the business, and left his widow well provided for; and now, reasoned he, "I have the offer made to me. Why should I not secure it at once? What have my friends to do with my affairs? Besides, 'it is better to offend others than yourself,' is the wise old adage. How can they tell on what principles I am going to conduct my business? I shall have an advantage that my late neighbour had not-I can see how the farm and the malting can be worked splendidly together. I shall grow as much barley on the farm as I can, and this can

be turned to the best advantage, and farming and malting be brought under my own supervision: this, with several other items of expenditure, will be an advantage in my favour. And if Rich-Man managed to save a fortune in a short life, and could leave his widow independent of the cares of the world, by his trade alone, what may I not hope to accomplish with farm and trade combined? I shall not hesitate a moment longer. I have fully decided the matter in my own mind, without any qualms of conscience, or of giving heed to the nonsensical talk about consistency of character. I shall go at once and pay the deposit, complete the transaction with all possible speed, and surprise my timid and well-meaning friends some day by presenting them with a new chapel as a compliment, showing them that their fears as to the stability of my principles were groundless; and that the good cause, instead of suffering, shall be based on a better footing by having a good substantial chapel for worship, in place of the old room. And besides, my friends cannot see the defect of their own reasoning. If the malt and drink trades are beset with such peculiar temptations to moral character as they suppose, what persons are to be found so suitable as pledged *Tectotallers and Christians*, to manage such trades? Will not these very principles be a guarantee that all things will be done decently and in order?"

When the mind is fully set on an object, it is wonderfully interesting to observe the fertility of its resource, and the strangeness of the sophisms that are advanced in justification of the course pursued.

> "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive."





# CHAPTER VIII.

# THE NEW UNDERTAKING AND ITS MORAL PROBLEMS.

E now arrive at a critical stage of our friend's history; and though our interest in his welfare remains unabated, we must confess that our confidence has been rudely shaken. Let it be observed that he has fully committed himself to the new undertaking, and that his friends are anxiously watching the result. They have no intention to question the honesty of his purpose; nor do they charge him with any intention of sacrificing Christian character or principles to promote his worldly interests. But they see difficulties and dangers on the road which he did not see, or against which he wilfully closed his eyes. It was so in the case of Balaam and his ass. Balaam's eagerness to seize hold on Balak's

unrighteous bribe, blinded him to the danger which stood in the way. And in his mad and desperate effort to force the passage which an angel defended, his nature became more brutish than that of his ass. And is not this same perverseness of principle to be seen still? It matters not to some what obstacles Providence throws across their path to prevent them from rushing headlong to perdition, and even if an angel guard it with drawn sword, there are those who will attempt to force a passage, no matter what the consequences; though a gibbet stand before them, and though the groans of the lost float in the air, and sound in their ears the knell of their coming doom, it is all to no Such is the recklessness of some, that purpose. they defiantly set at nought all warnings, and brave all consequences; while "a prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished."

"And truly prudent is that man alone, who, by another's faults, amends his own." It would have been well if our friend had taken good heed to his ways, and had more carefully thought over some of the moral difficulties that his friends had brought before his notice, before

he had made up his mind to embark in such a It was, no doubt, to be attributed to the over sanguineness of his temperament rather than to the stubbornness of his will; to impulse instead of reason. But a short experience served to convince him that he had acted with too great a precipitancy in the whole affair; that he had been leaning too much to his own understanding, and that on reflection he found a greater difficulty in shielding himself from the charges of inconsistency than he had imagined; and what was a more serious matter still, brought home to his conscience, was the fact that he had imposed upon himself a great cheat; that whilst he had been grasping after a shadow he had lost his hold of the substance—a contented mind and a quiet conscience.

"'Tis in this life we not unfrequent see

How some men labour long and wearily

To 'chieve a purpose which they have in view,

Yet lose their labour and the object too."

For several years our friend had stood before the public as an advocate of principles which were in direct antagonism to the interest of his new undertaking. From pulpit and platform he had denounced the drinking traffic, and all its associations, as an unmitigated curse to society; as a fountain from which flowed poisoned streams into every part of the country, poisoning the very springs of national life, and spreading ruin and desolation in the homes of the people, and filling workhouses and gaols with their inmates; and not unfrequently the cause of scandal and backsliding in the Church, irrespective of creed or party.

Now how to make a trade which is producing such terrible results on the interest of society, a fit and honourable profession for a Christian man to embark his capital in, and for such a man at the same time to maintain a character for consistency in his own estimation, and in the estimation of his fellow-Christians, had become a puzzle to him. And such a case in our judgment should be left for the casuist to decide. For the honest and simple-minded can settle most of the ordinary affairs of life by the old standing rule, "that the tree is known by its fruit." They therefore are content to leave the more doubtful questions in ethics to those who presume to resolve such nice points of conscience.

It was to this court of casuistry that our friend

had referred his case for decision; for the court of common sense had already given its verdict on the matter. He found himself entangled in a net work of moral difficulties on all sides. In his advocacey of the temperance question he had often appealed to his audience to consider the question from a religious stand point, by showing that on the Lord's day-when all classes of persons who call themselves Christians ought to be found in their sanctuaries worshipping God, and rendering to Him thanks for the institution of the Christian Sabbath, and for the privileges which, as a Sabbath-observing nation, we enjoy, men are compelled to labour who are employed in malt making. Where was the consistency of debarring many thousands of their fellow creatures of the blessing of the Sabbath by indulging in the use of an article which could not be produced without Sunday labour. purport of this argument was an appeal to Christians to give up drink, on the ground that the process which malt goes through in the making involves a large amount of Sunday work; therefore those Christians who drink, countenance, indirectly, Sabbath labour, as well as enforce it. And by so doing must indirectly

stand chargeable with a violation of the sacredness of the Lord's Day. This argument was popular at one time with temperance advocates in the first stages of the great controversy, and was often wielded with crushing effect on the Christian conscience. But the position in which our friend now stood sealed his lips on this ground of appeal; while at the same time he had placed a powerful weapon in the hands of his opponents, with which they could smite him with terrible effect. In fact, these moral difficulties pursued him in all directions; they beset him behind and before, and threw themselves across his path where ever he went. There was Travelling to appointments, standno escape. ing in the pulpit, or in the circle of friends, it was all as one-the thought of home and the malt kiln, and Sunday labour, would flash across his mind. If he stumbled on groups of profane persons, or on the multitude of Sabbath desecrators, his power of reproving and warning such of a day of coming wrath was gone. was shorn of his strength, He was silent now, where before time he would have been eloquent. If not embarrassed in the pulpit, his preaching was form, without power. It was the shadow of the former man—the spiritual life was gone. Such was the ruinous effect produced on his moral nature, by his eagerness to grasp this world, and such the inward conflict that had to be fought with principles and feelings, before they could accept of "mammon" in exchange for "the chief good."

"Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From Thee departing they are lost, and rove
At random without honour, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But, O Thou boundless Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."





# CHAPTER IX.

## TRADING DIFFICULTIES.

UR friend had selected the road along which he intended to travel, and was so absorbed in his project that he neglected to notice the danger signals that had been hoisted as a caution to those who travelled in that direction. On these signals were written the following inscription: "They that will be rich fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." These warnings have been given for the express purpose of pointing to the dangers to be encountered by those who persist in travelling on this road. And those who wilfully disregard them must take the consequences, whatever they may be. In all our prospective undertakings in life, we should sit down, in the first place, and count the cost, and see what rational probability there is of success, in what we undertake. Even if success is reasonably certain, what is the cost at which it must be purchased? If health, character, principle, and the loss of God's favour, then success, even to the gain of the world, is too dearly bought, and must be put down as a bad bargain, for which fools may strive, but not wise men. We have before pointed out that our friend did not pay sufficient attention to these important considerations. In our last chapter we dealt with the moral difficulties in which his business had entangled him. And now we proceed to look at his trading difficulties; for these were not sufficiently taken into account by him, in his over haste to secure the offered concern. whole of his small capital was required to work his farm to any advantage, for if there is nothing put into the land, farming is like everything else, there can be nothing got out of it. the more capital the farmer employs in manuring and improving the soil, the more he receives in return, as interest on the capital in outlay. So financial difficulties met him at the very outset of his commercial speculation, and the cares of the world began to weigh him down to the earth, and to crush out his spiritual life, which before time had been so vigorous and well-employed in promoting the welfare of others. To trade on borrowed capital has been found by those who have passed through the bitter experience, a terrible up-hill fight; especially when trade has been bad, and returns doubtful; and when the pet scheme of doing a large trade for "small profits and quick returns" has not been found workable.

This was the position our friend found himself placed in. He had embarked in a new undertaking, without any previous experience of the trading world. And working on borrowed capital, he had soon to face the difficulty of pushing trade to meet demands. And thousands know, to their commercial ruin, how bitter the process when trade must be done on the purchaser's terms, no matter what the sacrifice.

One is almost tempted to ask the question, how about the merchant's conscience, when the poor manufacturer is driven into such straits, that he is compelled to accept the offer, though it may not be more than half the cost of production. But this we must leave, and look at it in the light of the merchant's opportunity for taking the advantage of the trader's necessity. And still we can believe that the future will be long enough for things to be properly adjusted, either here or hereafter.

It is our wish to present our friend to the reader as an honest, well-meaning, but mistaken, man; and we think guilty of a grave error of judgment in having anything to do with a business he was in every respect so unfitted for. In his own mind at first, he thought that the malt trade would work nicely with his farm, that he should do a quiet, private trade among the farmers, that they would come to him with their orders, and consume as much malt as he could make; and that he should not be under any necessity of seeking trade among the publicans, and that in no respect would his character and position as a religious man be affected by the undertaking. But in this matter he was sadly disappointed. He found the farmers wanted looking after to secure their custom, the same as others; and when their orders were secured,

twelve or eighteen months' credit had to be given, which was simply commercial ruin to anyone working on borrowed capital. This was slow trade, long credit, and small profits, with a vengeance. It was this long credit system that compelled him to face other difficulties, of which he had steered clear to the present time. now by the force of circumstances, certainly not from choice, he had to confront them. These difficulties had been foreseen by his friends, and one, more sarcastic than the rest, had presented him with a fancy sketch of a temperance reformer courting the publicans for their favours. The idea of such an inconsistency he considered simply ridiculous; but now his altered circumstances were drifting in the direction which would give reality to the sketch, and from which he could only see one way of escape, and that by disposing of his business, and facing his creditors with liabilities greatly in excess of his assets. It was either this, or he must change his front, and boldly face the other alternativeof launching out among the publicans. Of the two evils the latter he considered the least, and he made up his mind to push his way amongst them, and introduce the principle of ready

money terms; or short credit with the tempting bait of heavy discount. It was upon this principle he hoped to turn the tide, which for some time had been running stiffly against him, into the channel of success. This plan of action would have been a safe course for some men to pursue, but for one whose weakness and danger lay in that direction, nothing but disaster and ruin could be looked for, as the result of his trading transaction among the publicans. Nor can we wonder that in the estimation of his friends his character for consistency was heavily discounted; and that the relation to his family and the Church soon presented a marked contrast from what it was before, as it passed through a wonderful and rapid process of deterioration. Nor were his worldly circumstances improved by the change. Home duties, as well as his farm, presented signs of neglect; indeed on all hands there appeared a heavy accumulation of arrears waiting to be cleared off; and he was now sensible that this unenviable condition of things had been brought about by his worldly spirit, and undue haste to become rich. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that he wished a thousand times over that the concern had been at Jericho, or elsewhere, so that he had had nothing to do with it; or that he had listened to the advice of his friends, and kept plodding on with his farming affairs, and left malt making and selling to those who were better qualified for such undertakings—to those who had no religious scruples to trouble them, nor Christian character to lose—men "who mind earthly things."

"A life all turbulence and noise may seem
To him that leads it, wise, and to be praised;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water and beneath clear skies."





## CHAPTER X.

## THE CRISIS.

HE storm which had long been brewing was now ready to burst, and the fears of those whose advice he had rejected, about being realized. His friends had forseen that for a person of his excitable temperament, and natural craving after the social glass, to have embarked in such an undertaking was tantamount to an act of insanity, not unlike the pranks of a madman playing with fire near a powder magazine—the forfeiture of life being the probable penalty for the rashness of the act.

In all localities there are those to be found who keep a keen look out for any act of inconsistency in the Christian professor, and especially in those who have been leaders and guides to others. This class of persons had prophesied that one day a terrible explosion would take place that would shatter the Society to fragments, and the once popular preacher would be a disgrace to himself and the cause he had represented. To such persons a brother's downfall generally yields a larger amount of satisfaction and joy than of sorrow and sadness. What better sport could there be for the "pot-house" and the village gossipers, than to find a professor of religion "three sheets in the wind," or to be lighting his pipe at the pump? Only let such a circumstance occur and the telegraph wires of gossip and scandal would spread the interesting information for the edification and enlightenment of the neighbourhood, as rapidly as if a fire had destroyed the village, and the event would serve as a nine days' wonder.

There are three centres in villages, generally, where news is collected, manufactured, and put into circulation, without correction or censorship over it. These depôts are, the blacksmith's shop; the cobbler's stall; and "The Pig and Whistle;" these vie with each other in circulating news of a sensational character—sometimes one gaining the palm, and sometimes the other. No wonder that our friend had been a spotted man by these rival centres, and that a sharp look out had been

kept on him as one likely to bring grist to the scandal mill, which would pay good toll when it came.

When he entered on his malting trade he was a pledged teetotaller, and had been for years, and, according to his own statement, "intended to remain one to the end of the chapter." But how he was to remain firm to his principles, surrounded by such temptations, none of his friends could see; they knew very well that the pillars of Hercules could not stand the strain, but would break in time.

It will be easy to understand, from the position in which he was placed, how the pledge business would have to be dealt with, to the satisfaction of his worldly friends and to his own ruin. Having become "all things to all men," and a member of the free and easy fraternity, these good fellows became interested in his company, and profuse in their good wishes that his business might be a grand success; and also, that no opportunity should be lost on their part to recommend his interest to their friends. Under the plausible pretext of anxiety for his health, as well as for the interest of his trade, they thought he ought not to be fettered in freedom of action by some

foolish and sentimental idea of applying an utterly impracticable rule to his life—that his pledge of abstention from the cheering glass manufactured from his malt, would be more honoured in its abandonment than in its observance. At any rate he could satisfy his friends and his conscience by pointing out that when he took the pledge he had no interest in the drinking trade, but now his trading interests were bound up with the prosperity and extension of the drink traffic, and that a change in circumstances would also necessitate a change of action.

How plausible such reasoning to one circumstanced like a drowning man, who catches at straws in the hope of saving life! or to one who places interest and inclination before conscience and principle! Listening to the plausible reasoning of his new patrons—following the cravings of his lower nature, and putting the question into the scale that probably he was undermining his constitution with his teetotal crotchets—he felt all but convinced that it was his duty to adopt a new method, and at the urgent entreaty of his friends, he decided to go at once and consult with the famous doctor, Mr. Take-a-little. This course was most satisfactory

to his friends, and they showered their compliments upon him without stint. This famous doctor had a wide and extensive practice, and all classes of society gave him their patronage. This did much to confirm our friend in his changed view of things, and often came to his help to stifle the voice of conscience within; for conscience, be it remembered, never gave consent, and when ever consulted on the matter it sternly rebuked the recreant thought, and uttered the inspired warning that "The backslider in heart should be filled with his own ways."

After a short experiment under the boasted system of Mr. Take-a-little, he was convinced that the much praised doctor had mistook the nature of his case, and that he had been treated by a quack, instead of a scientific and practical man. For in his case the treatment had produced symptoms of alcoholic poisoning, which threatened the horrors of delirium tremens, and seasons of melancholy madness, which he feared would end the mystery of life; terminating, it may be, in a suicidal death.

In the lucid intervals which occurred between these violent outbreaks of mental derangement, brought on by excessive drinking, he saw the thickening darkness of a drunkard's doom; which to avert he resolved to return to his good old friend and doctor, Mr. Touch-not.

The reader will see that such a nature could not be regulated by any half-measures. Sight, smell, touch, or taste, imperilled his safety—his salvation alone lay in the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. And to what multitudes of our fellow-creatures does the same rule apply, whose weakness appeals to the strong to remove obstacles out of the way, by reforming our social custom—by setting a good and safe example—by strengthening those who are weak, and confirming their faith in the principles of entire abstinence from intoxicating drinks. For by thus acting we may prevent as well as save—prevention being better than cure.





# CHAPTER XI.

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

"IR, didst thou not sow good seed in thy fields? From whence then hath it tares?"

"An enemy hath done this," is the unerring reply. And the enemy in this case is the demon drink, and the love of the world in combination, working ruin for time and eternity.

The repeated falls in our friend's history to which we have referred in previous chapters, need not be particularized in this. They formed a dark and gloomy covering to the picture of his domestic life, and of the sorrow and grief his wife and daughter had to endure; and also foreshadowed to them that a crisis in his temporal affairs was near at hand. The disgrace and scandal he had brought on the cause of morality and religion, made his case a subject

for Church discipline. "For let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from . iniquity."

The duty which the members of the Church had to perform was clear, however painful to their feelings. They must enforce discipline, and exclude from their fellowship one who had in former time laboured hard and disinterestedly for the promotion of religion through the whole circuit, and one who had been held in high esteem by his brethren; and whose labours had been crowned with such abundant success.

In due course this painful question was considered by a full Board of Preachers and Circuit officials. They considered the matter before them in the spirit of true Christian sympathy, having compassion for an erring and fallen brother; but also with a resolute purpose of defending the purity of the Church, and of being faithful to conscience and loyal to Christ. After having given the subject their long and prayerful consideration, they reached the conclusion that his name must be removed from the plan, and also excluded from membership.

This was the decision of the Quarter-day Board, but the fallen brother had many true friends at the meeting who presented appeals and petitions, from several places in the Circuit, praying for mercy on his behalf, and requested that a further period of trial might be given before the decision was finally carried into effect.

These appeals were based on the fact that he had again signed the pledge, and that in the most solemn manner he had vowed unto the Lord never to allow the maddening drink to enter his lips again; and that he had resolved to arrange his affairs, and rid himself of the wretched business at the first opportunity. By thus acting they hoped he would again be happy and useful in the Church, and do something to redeem the past.

The presentation of fact and statement, and promises of amendment, had the effect his friends desired, and averted the calamity they so much dreaded. For they feared that if severed from the Society, he would be indifferent and reckless as to his character, and desperate as to consequences. But if he could still feel that their sympathy and prayers were with him, he might be strengthened in the time of temptation and weakness to fight down his old

enemy, win moral victories over self, and regain a respectable position, and be useful in the Church.

The Quarterly Board agreed to withdraw their decisions, and adjourn the subject until their next meeting; hoping by that time to find that his promises of reformation had been carried out, and that substantial improvement would have taken place.

About this time, and after the absence of two years, the writer, who had been living in a distant part of the country, re-visited the locality, and was kindly received by his old friend and family. This visit was a reminder of old times, for our friend welcomed all comers with a warm heart and open hand. His house, as we have elsewhere remarked, was always open to preachers, either local or itinerant, to walk in, rest, refresh, and travel on.

Of course, between old friends and fellow-workers, who had been companions in long and weary journeys to every part of the Circuit in connection with Christian work, it was natural that the past would be brought under review, and that some reference would be made to the question of Church discipline in relation to

matters which were painful and personal. But on that subject little was said. The dead past was left to bury its dead. For what pleasure or profit could there be found in disinterring the irrevocable past? How much wiser is the policy "to lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for the future, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, when it might be healed."

When the time came for returning, our friend accompanied us some distance. Our parting was the parting of true friends, we commended each other to the Lord, and finally we indulged in the hope of a happy meeting at no very distant future.

The decision arrived at by the Quarterly Board recommended itself to the Societies generally through the Circuit, but more especially to the wife and daughter, and to those who undertook to plead the case at the meeting. The hope was now strongly cherished that expulsion from the Church would be averted by a consistent and sober life. Everthing was done to encourage him in the path of social and moral progress. A few appointments at intervals were given to him, and as time went on the

i

hopes and expectations of his friends seemed likely to be fully realized. For once more, to the satisfaction of his friends, he stood forth as one of the accredited preachers on the plan, and had appointments committed to his trust at some of the most important stations in the Circuit.

- "Thou know'st the way to bring me back,
  My fallen spirit to restore;
  Oh! for Thy truth and mercy's sake,
  Forgive, and bid me sin no more,
  The ruins of my soul repair,
  And make my heart a house of prayer.
- "Ah! give me, Lord, the tender heart,
  That trembles at the approach of sin:
  A godly fear of sin impart;
  Implant, and root it deep within.
  That I may dread Thy gracious power,
  And never dare to' offend Thee more."





# CHAPTER XII.

## THE LAST SERMON.

N Sunday, February 14th, 1847, our friend preached Afternoon and Evening in Aster-Town Chapel to large and appreciative audiences. At this place he had always been a special favourite, and it was an interesting sight for a spectator to witness the hearers trooping along the roads from all parts of the surrounding district where the points converged at the spot where the White Chapel stood. The building was a conspicuous object from the open country in front, while its rear was flanked by the magnificent range of Long Mountains. On this occasion his old friends had shown up in great numbers, in the hope that their presence and sympathy might give him encouragement to persevere in a steady and consistent course. For his erratic and unstable past had been a

source of annoyance and painful regret to his friends and all the well-wishers of the good cause. His visit on this occasion became memorable, alike from the fact that it proved to be his last sermon, and also that his own death and melancholy end furnished a strange comment and thrilling illustration to his solemn and awful theme.

Let us turn to the 29th chapter of the Book of Proverbs, and read the first verse: "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." We have now the text before us, let us attend to his treatment of the subject.

He began his sermon by reminding his hearers that they were all free agents, and that God had set before them life and death. That the responsibility rested with themselves as to the choice they made. That God entreated man by His Prophets, and through the revelation He had made of Himself, that He had no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but that it was His will that man should turn from all his evil doings, and thereby obtain the favour of the Divine Being. God was represented as saying to His wayward creatures, "Turn ye, turn ye

from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" He showed that the Bible was full of entreaties, expostulation, invitations, promises, assurances, commands, warnings and examples, all of which were for the purpose of inducing man to turn from his sin, and find his way to heaven. He pointed out that if the sinner continued in his downward path, the guilt and condemnation must rest on his own conscience, for it would be impossible to charge God with his eternal ruin.

His subject, he said, was "the guilt and danger of rejecting Divine admonitions," and he need not travel outside the inspired Book for argument and illustration to prove and enforce the theme of his text. Look, continued he, at the flood in all its wild and desolating horrors, so terrible and merciless in its down pouring of wrath and destruction, that there is no quarter given to any living thing outside the ark. For what cause did a world perish in such a sudden and awful calamity? For not heeding the Divine warnings and admonitions given through Noah. the preacher of righteousness. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plains, would have escaped the vengeance of eternal fire. had they but obeyed the Divine commands. Lot's

wife would have been safely sheltered in Zoar, had she not been so presumptuous as to trifle with the miraculous deliverance, and to look back again to the abomination of the polluted city, from which messengers from heaven had warned her to escape. For trifling with such solemn warnings, her calcined body, smitten with sudden death, blasted by the displeasure of heaven, stands a beacon to warn others that "they who are often reproved, harden their necks, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Pharaoh heeded not Moses, the servant of God. Miracles and most appalling wonders could not soften his proud and arrogant will. He fought against God, and his terrible overthow in the Red Sea proved to him the peril and danger of not yielding to the Divine admonitions; while at the same time it stands as an awful warning to others.

Not less startling and admonitory is the history and end of the voluptuous and impious Belshazzar, who, in the height of his pride and impiety, saw the mysterious hand-writing on the wall; the sentence and the doom of one on whom warning and admonition was lost. For the Prophet Daniel, in addressing him, said:

"And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. And this writing was written: God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. And in that night was Belshazzar, the King of the Chaldeans, slain."

Such, my friends, said the preacher, are a few of the warnings and examples recorded in the blessed Book, warning us with a voice from heaven of the awful consequences of not heeding the admonition God has given us against sin, and not yielding to the strivings of the Holy Spirit in the heart and conscience.

In conclusion, let us pray that we may not be found among those who sin wilfully after having received the truth. For "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The text is a warning to us all; it may be the last warning that a merciful and loving God will give to us. Oh let His long suffering toward us lead us to repentance and not to presumption! and let us go home with the words ringing in our ears and sinking deep into our hearts. "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

The preacher had thrown his whole soul into his subject, and his intense earnestness through the whole service, made a profound impression on the congregation. The proof of this was seen from the large numbers that remained to the prayer meeting at the close, and from the devout attention and solemn awe that pervaded the whole service, as well as from the comments made by the hearers one to another as they left the Chapel. His friends and admirers were heard to remark that never in his best days had he preached with greater power and effect, nor had they ever heard him with so much pleasure and profit as they had on this occasion. And on the sad news of his sudden death, one who was present at the service exclaimed, "Oh, poor fellow! I could have wished he had died in the pulpit after such a service, it would have been a glorious finish to life, but now, alas, it is as painful as it is dark and sad!"

This brief outline on the subject may serve to refresh the memory of those who heard it, for a few "remain unto this present time, but some are fallen asleep." It may also present a picture to the reader by which he may form some idea of the effect produced on a country audience by a preacher so awfully in earnest, that his pouring forth resembled a volcanic eruption, of which words can give only an imperfect description of the scene; falling far below the reality, or of the effects produced.

It may be that his last sermon was a message from God to some who heard him, leading them to repentance and to the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But of this we are certain, that God's word "shall not return to Him void: it shall accomplish that which He pleaseth, and shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it.





# CHAPTER XIII.

## EARNEST PLEADINGS.

N leaving the Chapel, he was about to prepare for his return home; but the distance being very considerable, the night dark, the weather tempestuous, and the roads rough and dangerous, his friends solicited him to stay the night with them. Thinking it the wiser course, he yielded to their kind entreaties.

His absence from home for the night had excited some anxiety in the mind of his wife and daughter, though the state of the weather led them partly to conclude that he had, contrary to custom, been prevailed to stay at Aster-Town all night.

On his arriving at home on the Monday Morning, he was received with a kindly greeting by wife and daughter. The business affairs of the day were attended to, and the little household, father, mother, and daughter, were happy in each others' society, and strove to heighten and sweeten the pleasures of domestic life, by talking to each other about the services of the previous Sabbath, and of the greetings and kind remembrances sent by the Society to them, and to other friends who were in repute in the village Church at home. At the close of the day the family Bible was placed on the table, the Scriptures read, and prayer and praise closed that day on this family and household.

On Tuesday Morning the family awoke from their refreshing and undisturbed repose of the night, and commenced the duties of the day with light and happy hearts. But this peace and quiet was all at once disturbed by the master giving orders for his horse to be got ready, for he had made up his mind to go to Yew-Town. This was a market town some fifteen or twenty miles distant; it was market day, and he said he must be there. This decision at once awoke the darkest suspicions in his wife's mind, and threw before her imagination frightful visions, such as she had seen in a dream about this journey. To

prevent him undertaking it, and all the dangers which haunted her mind concerning the journey, she and her daughter strove to the utmost of their power to prevent him from carrying out his purpose.

Oh! for the skilful hand of the artist, accurately to paint this touching scene—A wife in tears and on her knees, a daughter, just budding into all the graces and charms of womanhood, an only child, clinging with arms which love and natural affection had clasped together around the father's neck, tears streaming out of soft and glistening eyes, her whole soul thrown into her pathetic appeal, "Oh, father, don't go! for my own and mother's sake, pray, father, don't go! Father, you won't go, will you? I am sure you won't let me plead with you in vain!"

Moved, almost to tears, by their tender and touching appeals, though still firm as to his intention of carrying out the purpose he had formed, his reply was, "I must go. I have important business to transact which no one can do for me. I wish it were possible to avoid going, but business is pressing, and therefore I must attend to it. Some of my creditors are determined to enforce their claims, I cannot.

stave off the evil day any longer. I must rain money by some means to-day, to meet the moclamorous of my creditors. But you need not distress yourselves about me, for I shattend to business as soon as I get to town, as return home immediately after. Hence I shat be at home again early in the evening."

"But," said the wife, "I have heard you sa as much before about returning home in goo time from that place, and I wish you had neve opened a trade there. It has been the cause of untold misery in our home, and of grief an shame to the Church. The very mention of th place sends a pang of indescribable agon through my mind, and I implore you, for ou sakes, as well as for your own, not to go there."

This fervent appeal did not, however, alte the purpose which he had formed for taking th journey, but led him to repeat the urgency of the business; at the same time adding that money must be had, and that this should be his last visit to the place which caused them a much distress; reminding them also at the same time "that those who are in business must be prepared to put up with the cares and anxietie which are inseparably connected with the busi

ness affairs of this life. That his object in taking to the trade was on their account, more than for his own pleasure or happiness. For his ambition, since he had been a family man, was to look forward to the day when those who were dependent upon him should be amply provided for; and that when such a time should come that his worldly affairs would justify such a conclusion, he should not only feel a proud, but a happy, man—stronger to fight the battle of life, and more resigned to the *Divine Will* to leave this world when he could feel certain that his family were well provided for."

To this his wife and daughter replied "that they did not wish him to imperil his eternal happiness on their account, for whatever he might have hoped to have accomplished for them in a worldly sense, it had been a failure, for the trade had nearly destroyed their peace and comfort, and as long as he was determined to visit Yew-Town, there was no prospect of happiness. That was the reason they so strongly objected to him going near the place."

The reader may see in this chapter of "earnest pleadings" a true picture, which he may know how to apply to other cases besides the one we

have described. For they are not the only pleaders, there are those amongst us who are constantly imploring those whom they love to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." Parents beseeching their children to give up evil companionship and bad habits, and to live honourable and virtuous lives. Wives entreating their husbands, for their children's sakes, to give up their pot companions and the public house, and to look after the interest of their own home. How rapidly would the great aggregate of human misery disappear, if men would eschew that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good!





# CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FATAL DECISION.

E have seen how unavailing the pleadings of wife and daughter were to dissuade our friend from taking his intended journey. His reasons for going to the town were of pressing importance. Their urgency was the justification to his own mind that his decision was right. If so, then what right has anyone to interfere? He is not a child, he is a mana man of age, of experience, of business, with a will of his own, strong and resolute, to carry out his plans and purposes; besides, a Christian and a teetotaller into the bargain. If a man with all these combinations of good qualities is not fit to be trusted from his home to visit a market town on a market day, we ask, who is? Surely there is an end to personal freedom, and arrangements had better be made at once to keep a man in leading strings all the days of his life.

This is all very plausible to an outsider—to one who has not been behind the scenes, but to his friends, who knew his weakness, the subject was serious, as well as painful. More especially as in his visits to that particular place he resembled the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who, after plundering their victim, left him wounded and helpless, for his wife and friends to act the part of the good Samaritan, to bind up the wounds and pour in the oil and the wine.

"But will not the grace of God prevent a man from falling?" is a question often asked. "Yes, unquestionably it will, if it is not frustrated," is our reply. It will teach a man to flee from temptation, but that is different from running into it. It teaches not only to abstain from evil, but also from the appearance of evil. If a man rushes headlong into temptation, he must take the consequences; grace and he have parted company. If a man is rash enough to leap off London Bridge into the river, there is no grace to avert the consequences of the act. It is the majesty of law

unsheathing its sword in vindication of its authority to punish the presumptous transgressors. So if a man takes poison, whether he be a Christian or not, the penalty is the same, it shows no partiality. And in like manner if a man drink alcoholic poison, he must take the consequences as to the effects produced. He must look for no miracle, that would be looking for a special license for self indulgence. It would be turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and continuing in sin that grace may abound. The grace of God we should earnestly implore to guide and keep us in the path of duty, and to shield us against temptation; for this on God's promise we can rely.

"For all who seek shall find, and none who ask shall be denied."

If this important principle were attended to, and carried into practical effect by those who profess to be Christians, the Church would seldom be dishonoured by the disgraceful falls of its members.

We have seen that our friend decided to leave home, and take the journey which his family so strongly opposed. When a man leaves his home, who will say that he shall ever see it

again? A thousand unforeseen contingences may arise which may terminate his earthly existence. Some time ago we witnessed a painful and sudden termination of life. hands employed at a large flour mill were leaving their work in the evening. At the same time a young and spirited horse had taken fright. The man in the trap had lost all control over the frightened animal. The horse and rider were dashed against the post of the gateway the moment the hands employed in the mill were passing out, killing two men and the horse in the collision. Not long ago, in the middle of the day, a young married man had left his home, and walked not more than a hundred yards from his own door, when he was entangled in the machinery at the mill, and in less than five minutes from the time he left, his wife, his mangled and broken body was a lifeless corpse. And yet a more strange fatality occurred the other day. A gentleman riding his horse to a railway station to meet a friend, gave his horse in charge while he went on the plat-The horse becoming restive, got on the He seeing the danger to which both horse and man were exposed, rushed to the rescue. being insensible of his danger; but strange to say, both the men and the horse were killed by a passing train.

These facts illustrate the uncertainty of life, while at the same time they show us the importance of being always prepared to meet death.

"Fate steals along with silent tread, Found oft'nest in what least we dread; Frowns in the storm with angry brow, But in the sunshine strikes the blow."

With some it is held as an accepted axiom that coming events cast their shadows before them. It was on this principle that Mrs. Berry had come to cherish a horrible dread of her husband's journey to Yew-Town. For some time her mind had been filled with strange presentiments of some near and dreadful calamity that was coming upon them, and on the Sunday night, during his absence, her dreams were of the most distressing character, and in the morning, when he announced his "fatal decision," her mind and nervous system were affected as by an electric shock, as we have described in the chapter on "Earnest Pleadings."

The servant had received his master's orders, and they were obeyed. The horse was brought

out of the stable, and all is ready for the start on what, the sequel of our story will justify us in describing as, "THE FATAL DECISION."





### CHAPTER XV.

### THE LAST JOURNEY AND THE MIDNIGHT REVEL.

HERE is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,"—Prov. xiv, 12. Traveller, beware of the road on which you travel for eternity. Remember there is a "broad road which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; while narrow is the road that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." Seek then the narrow path and travel on it, for Christ Himself is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and those who walk with Him shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The subject of our narrative was one who thought his own way the best, while his friends felt morally certain that he was a mistaken

man, that his business would be a snare to him, by which he would be entangled in "the ways of death." And now as we follow him in his last journey, and give a description of it, the reader can decide which of the parties were right.

It is needless to observe that the customary good morning had been passed, and the pledge of friendship given, with a request, made and granted, that there should be an early return from town in the evening. And now we see him starting off, and gazed after by wife and daughter till he is up the road and out of sight.

The morning is dark and sunless, the air is cold and piercing, drifting snow fills the air, and the frost binds the snow flakes as they fall to-horse and rider. The journey is over the Welsh mountains, the distance hard upon twenty miles; progress is slow under such circumstances, but by courage and perseverance Yew-Town is reached; there is time enough to feed the horse, to get refreshment, to do business, and to start for home early. After such a ride in the month of February on a bitter cold day, how pleasant was the bright and cheering fire and the comfortable room at the "Malt Shovel," specially

arranged for the comfort of town and country visitors; whilst its ordinary on market days had special attractions for visitors, and seldom failed to secure a full company at the dinner table of those who had come to town to enjoy themselves. To such persons it is an important matter to know where they can get "a good cut," and who keeps the best glass of ale on tap. When the weather is fine a large amount of talking and time is consumed over small matters in the streets on market days, and when the business is over, it is a rule with many of them to turn off the streets into the drinking establishments, to "liquor up" for the return journey. day being exceptionally cold and clammy, our friend felt no inclination to part from the social company he had fallen in with, or to leave the room in which he was so snugly seated. special business to town on this occasion was to look up his customers, get orders, collect in his accounts, and make a short stay. These of course were important matters, but he decided to let them stand in abeyance for the present. purposing to run up on the first fine day he could spare the time, and then look these matters up, while for the present he should content himself by fishing for a few orders from the present company, which would be breaking up fresh ground; and he would try to get the landlady to pay him for the last load of malt. These concerns settled, there would be nothing to detain him longer in town, and he should keep his promise of an early return.

This is all very plausible, and some men would have carried out the programme in all its details, but in our friend's case, however strong his love for family and home, we have a sad and painful remembrance of his frailties. We now begin to tremble for his safety; still we will not give up hope, but watch the conflict with keenest anxiety. The odds are against him. The chance of victory is on the side of the enemy. The skirmishing, which is the prelude of battle, has already begun. The attack will be made on the fortress. The key to the position is to get the pledge broken, then all is lost, the triumph of the enemy will be complete.

Let us look at the position of the contending parties. As far as we can see it is *one* against a host. We have before looked outside the "Malt Shovel," and the day is cold and cheerless, but inside the fire blazes, the tap keeps running, and the glasses sparkle and foam with the strongest ale, as a counter-blast to the cold outside. The company is bent on enjoyment, and they mean to drink and "drive dull care away." "And oft in chorus loud they praised the virtues of the god of wine."

It is now a matter of some curiosity to see what part our friend will act in this smokeroom drama which is now being acted. refuse to drink ale brewed from his own malt, then he is not Casar's friend, nor on the right tack to get further orders from the publican, nor patronage from the convivial party. he has fertility of resource, he is not going to compromise principles, but he will set a sprat to catch a mackerel. And as a tradesman he must keep his weather eye on business, if he has to become all things to all men; for that is no more than what others have to do now as the He informed his friends how he world goes. heartily enjoyed good fellowship, and that he was an advocate for people enjoying themselves when they met on market days. Social intercourse he said he looked upon as the means of brightening man's earthly lot, and of stimulating man's energies to high and noble aims in life, Continuing his remarks, "Gentlemen," said he, "I have reasons for not drinking myself, which I need not explain to such an intelligent company as I have now the honour of addressing. It is not from selfish motives that I abstain—in proof of which I ask this company to do me the pleasure of drinking at my expense for the good of the house. And as the time has now arrived at which I must start for home, I must submit to the sacrifice of the further pleasure of such intelligent and agreeable society which I am proud to say I have heartily appreciated." This speech was not only vociferously applauded, but toasted in full bumpers, the company up standing. It had brought matters to a crisis. "If he must go," said one and another of the company, "he must not be permitted to leave this warm and comfortable room and ride over those cold and bleak mountains in such weather as this without taking something to keep up the heat of the system, and to ward off the cold. To allow him to do so would be an act of inhumanity on our part, and on his nothing less than insanity." This spontaneous outburst of disinterested forethought for our friend's comfort and welfare was too much for his yielding and complacent nature to resist. "For if from the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, who," said he, "am I, that I should set up my private opinion in opposition to the united judgment of this respectable party." How we could have wished that Martin Tupper had been by his side to have preached to him his philosophy of "no surrender!"

"Ever constant, ever true,
Let the word be, No Surrender!
Boldly dare and greatly do!
No Surrender, No Surrender!
And, though Fortune's smiles be few,
Hope is always springing now,
Still inspiring me and you
With a magic—No Surrender!

"Nail the colours to the mast,
Shouting gladly, No Surrender!
Troubles near are all but past—
Serve them as you did the last;
No Surrender, No Surrender!
Though the skies be overcast,
And upon the sleety blast,
Disappointments gather fast,
Beat them off with, No Surrender!

"Constant and courageous still,
Mind, the word is, No Surrender!
Battle, though it be uphill,
Stagger not at seeming ill!

No Surrender, No Surrender!

Hope, and thus your hope fulfil—
There's a way where there's a will,

And the way all cares to kill,

Is to give them, No Surrender!"

But unfortunately for him the philosopher was not present, and the principle at stake was "SURRENDERED." But what's the cost? Ah, who can tell?

The pledge broken, he is no longer a free man, the will is also broken, the moral powers are led captive by the terrible craving of his old appetite, his whole nature fired by drink, "and set on fire of hell." Alas for the poor inebriate! Some time ago he was concerned about starting for home; it would have been well for him had Now he might think about home, he gone. but he has lost the power to go there. Appetite craves for "one glass more." A friend going on the same road tries to induce him to go with him, and so he will after "one glass more," and "one glass more" is the order of the evening. till there is a positive refusal to serve him with the "one glass more."

It is not necessary to narrate every particular in connection with this last journey, but there

is one incident we must not omit to notice, as it bears on the sequel of our story. On entering the town on the eastern side two roads converge, and on leaving the town these two roads diverge northward and eastward. On the angle stands a public house, well situated for the accommodation of visitors going into the town or leaving A pretentious sign board swings at the angle, giving the house a royal name. friend had proceeded thus far on his homeward journey, and he thought he would have "just one glass more," at the same time being suddenly smitten with a passionate fit of loyalty. He allied himself with the worshippers of Bacchus, who had the sanction of the Queen's name inscribed on the outside. This Bacchanalian party continued their orgies till the flight of time had brought the midnight hour. The scene of boisterous mirth and drunken revelry was well suited to his excitable temperament in his maddened and fallen condition. Yet thoughts of home haunted his mind at intervals through the night, as ever and anon such expressions as the following were known to have fallen from his lips: "I must go home. Yes, I promised my wife and daughter to be at home early." Then after a pause, "Yes, I see them there—they are looking out for me—O bless them, I must go home—home—home." Then as if the memories of the past had rushed before him, and his present condition had pointed the bitter contrast, his mind appeared to have passed under a total eclipse; and, like one in a fit of frenzied madness, passionately exclaimed, "I will go home, nothing shall prevent me, I'll go, if I go through hell fire to get there."

Sampson, the Philistines are on thee! arise and smite them as of yore! But alas, he is now shorn of his strength. His enemies have fallen on him in their might. The light of reason is extinguished, and he is bound in burning fetters, never more to be free. So we let the curtain fall on this sad midnight scene. And for our friend we will say, farewell home, farewell loved ones, farewell to life, farewell to all. For

"To see the human mind o'erturned,
Its loftiest heights in ruin laid,
And reason's lamp, which brightly burn'd,
Obscur'd, or quenched in frenzy's shade:
A sight like this may well awake
Our grief, our fear—for nature's sake.

"It is a painful, humbling thought— To know the empire of the mind, With wit endow'd, with science fraught,
Is fleeting as the passing wind;
And that the richest boon of heaven
To man is rather lent than given.

- "To-day he sits on reason's throne,
  And bids his subject powers obey:
  Thought, memory, will,—all seem his own,
  Come at his bidding, list his sway.
  To-morrow—from dominion hurl'd,
  Madness pervades the mental world!
- "O think not, though forlorn and drear
  The maniac's doom—his lot the worst,
  There is a suffering more severe
  Than his sad records have rehears'd;
  "Tis his, whose virtue struggles still
  In hopeless conflict with his will.
- "There are—before whose mental eye
  Truth has her chastest charms displayed,
  But gaudier phantoms fluttering by,
  The erring mind have still betray'd;
  Till gathering clouds in awful night
  Have quenched each beam of heavenly light."





# CHAPTER XVI.

HOME PICTURE; OR, THE NIGHT OF AGONY.

ILL he keep his promise? Shall we see him at home early to-night? were the all absorbing thoughts of wife and daughter after they parted in the morning. And such thoughts were natural for them to indulge, for they felt as if the whole of their future happiness hinged on this one point. Therefore we cannot wonder that their minds were in a state of excitement, and that they began to weigh probabilities, to see on which side the balance lay, for or against an early return. They had many bitter remembrances of his former visits to this particular town. But of late they considered circumstances had altered in their favour. For instance, they reasoned, "he is now an abstainer—pledged under peculiar circumstances; besides, his Christian character

and word of honour to his friends and the quarter-day are at stake. Also we trust that the rallying round of his old friends as at Aster-Town will do much to inspire him with strength on this occasion, and with watchfulness for the future. Then again, we hope he will have his mind occupied with the thoughts of his work at home on the coming Sabbath, for he knows he is one of the preachers planned for the Special Services, and is appointed to lead the Love Feast in the evening. And already this is talked of in the village, and much curiosity is excited as to what his testimony will be at the Love Feast." Having passed these matters under review, they came to the conclusion that these were reasonable grounds to expect the fulfilment of his promises, and also to hope for a bright and happy future; at least till events should prove otherwise.

With these thoughts they entered heartily on the domestic duties of the day, and busied themselves in getting everything in readiness, so that he might receive a happy and hearty welcome on his return in the evening.

The fire was made bright and cheering; slippers and boot-jack were to hand; the kettle shiming

and steaming; the white table cloth spread; the tea service was tastefully arranged, as if the occasion were more than ordinary. clean pipe with a supply of the best bird's eye tobacco and a spittoon were all in readiness. Everything was done that active hands and loving hearts could think of, in anticipation of the wants and comfort of him whose return was anxiously expected. And not only inside the house, but outside, the same thoughtfulness had been exercised. The servant was ordered to prepare the stable with extra food and a good bed for the horse, after the day's journey; also he was to be ready at a moment's call on the master's arrival.

And now the sun has set for the day. Wife and daughter thought it had set in unusual darkness, and prognosticated something dreadful about to take place. This sudden sunset and darkness sent a thrill of horror through their minds, and so terrified them that they went to their neigbours to know if they had observed anything unusual. The good neighbours, knowing that the mind, when in a state of excitement, will draw strange conclusions from the ordinary occurrences of nature, observed that they only

noticed it was dark a little sooner than usual. This they thought was occasioned by the black cloud that was passing over the village about the time of sundown, and that they hoped Mr. Berry would be at home before the threatened storm set in.

To this kind wish they responded from the depths of their loving and expectant hearts, and returned into their house to watch and wait his arrival. "Oh, how I wish he would come!" was the expressed and unexpressed language of their hearts. "Surely he cannot be long now. Let us go to the bottom of the garden, and listen if we can hear anyone coming down the road. We can tell the old mare's trot a mile off."

This suggestion was soon put into practice, and repeated many times. But the passers by were not those they were looking for; nor upon interrogation could they give any encouraging information. These sallies into the garden, and retreats into the house, were kept up at intervals as the hours of the evening wore on until midnight. Notwithstanding the piercing coldness of the night, the howling of the wind, and the darkness which had fallen on every sux-

rounding object, love, hope, and eager longings and lookings kept their courage up, though terrible fears haunted their ninds. Sometimes they would think that in the darkness of the night the wrong road had been taken, and that horse and rider were lost on the mountains, or had fallen over some precipice and been dashed to pieces.

Such thoughts as these, and many more of a similar character, were quite natural under the circumstances. These fears were also heightened and intensified by other incidents of small importance, which at other times and under other circumstances would have been passed over without comment or notice. The dog "Dick," a true and faithful servant, had attended to his usual duties throughout the day about the farm yard, in keeping the pigs, poultry, and geese in their proper places, and had noticed that no strange cattle nor sheep got into the fields or yard, and had given faithful warning to strangers approaching the house, to keep at a respectable distance, for he would allow no intruders on the premises during his master's absence. All these duties "Dick" had performed with unusual care and fidelity, but as the time had passed when his master should have returned home, he gave signs of great anxiety and distress. He became a faithful watcher at the gate, and his distress was manifested by his loud and doleful howling. And as the night wore on, the cries of poor "Dick" were distressing to hear, so much so that other dogs were touched with a true and kindred sympathy, till at length all the dogs in the village took up the midnight lamentation—a horrid dirge.

To the howling of the dogs in the village on that memorable night must be added the piercing and doleful cry of the owls, ringing out in the darkness of the night; and above all, the terrible cry of the screech-owl, believed by some to be the harbinger of death. This bird had struck the windows of the house the exact number of times, and at each stroke had made the terrible and significant cry, which superstition had long held as the death message. Its cries were terrible on that night, and made the hearts of the anxious watchers sink like lead within them. And then in the midst of all these fears and terrors, in the dead of the night, one loud crash was heard, as if a thunderbolt had struck the house. In the midst of this tremendous sensation, mother and daughter clasped each other as in the embrace of death, and fell into a swoon. And when the morning dawned, their spirits had been in the land of dreams, and, like one of old, they had seen and heard strange things, not lawful to be uttered. The night had passed—a night never to be forgotten; a night of hopeless expectation; of bitter disappointment; of darkness and horror; of fears and hopes, such as no pencil can paint nor tongue can describe. And yet the loved and absent one had not arrived, though another day had dawned.





### CHAPTER XVII.

### CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

AVID, the poet and king, once sang: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." This might have been David's experience, and his words have inspired many a sorrowful and drooping spirit with joy and confidence in God while passing through a season of mental conflict and spiritual darkness. But such was not the experience of those of whom we are writing. They had had their night of weeping and anguish, but for them the morning brought with it neither joy nor gladnees; their darkness and sorrow were unrelieved by the morning light. Their nervous system had received a shock, and their excited imagination had painted pictures, not of domestic joy or peace, or of a bright and happy future, but the reverse—scenes of darkness and horror had haunted their minds, and filled them with terrors. Had bright visions been vouchsafed to them in this terrible crisis, they would have been hailed as angel visitors from some bright and happy world, as ministering spirits, to minister strength and consolation in the time of need, when their minds were burdened with the agony of a bitter suspense.

The night had passed, and to them it would be a night which would never be forgotten. The morning had come, but no tidings of the absent one had yet reached his home. Mrs. Berry endeavoured to nerve herself for the duties of the day, and to stand prepared to receive whatever information might come to hand; for any news, however sad, she considered preferable to her present state of doubt and uncertainty.

Mother and daughter set about their household duties, which, for a time, diverted their minds from these distressing thoughts. And when the broad daylight enabled them to look outside the house, they had the consolation to find that the storm which had passed over the house in the night had been more terrible in its effect on their imagination, than destructive to life or property. For beyond the blowing off of the chimney pots which had fallen on the roof and broken a hole through the tiles, which they thought was the crash of doom, no other traces were to be found.

It was now a question with them how to answer the enquiries of the neighbours, for it was customary for them to call to know the state of the markets. Mrs. Berry did not wish to let her neighbours know that her husband had not returned, for she knew what interpretation they would give to the fact, therefore she was anxious to keep the matter a secret as long as she could, both for her husband's sake and also for the interest of morality. For it was generally known in the village that when he went to Yew-Town, his trade amongst the publicans was done under the inspiration of alcohol, the effect of which had been but too apparent. For hitherto it had proved detrimental to his moral character and injurious to his temporal interests:

In all such emergencies Mrs. Berry knew

that she had one particular friend to whom she could go at all times, and with whom all family and private matters were held as a sacred trust, never to be revealed to a third party. friend was the widow of the deceased maltster from whom they had purchased the business. This good woman had remained in the village, and devoted her time and influence in promoting the social and moral welfare of her neighbours. She had the Berrys' welfare in view when she decided to turn over her business to them. She fancied that she was conferring upon them a great boon, and that by so doing Mr. Berry would have time and means different from what he had had, to devote himself more fully to his evangelistic work through the circuit. this respect she had been painfully disappointed, and had forgotten for the moment that he could not take fire into his bosom without being burned, no more than he could touch pitch without being daubed; and that religion and morality repudiate the alliance and scorn the aid of the hay, wood, and stubble, the tainted and tarnished gains of a traffic, the prolific source of a nation's crime, and of humanity's direct curse.

Mrs. Rich-Man knew all about this journey to Yew-Town, and how anxiously his return had been looked for on the previous evening, for she had spent most of the day with Mrs. Berry and daughter in a neighbourly way, talking over matters relating to the Special Services on the coming Sabbath, and about providing dinner and tea for the preachers who were coming to the Meetings from a distance, and of the evening Love Feast, which was looked forward to with more than ordinary interest. These special features were a joy in anticipation—a kind of foretaste of a blessed Sabbath, and of a bright out-look of a great spiritual feast.

Mrs. Rich-Man was just thinking about her friend, and arranging matters to start over to see Mr. Berry, and to congratulate him on his safe and early return last evening. When to her great surprise Mrs. Berry was coming to her. In her looks she read the distress of her heart, she needed no words to explain the terrible grief; and as a wise and tender-hearted woman, she did all she could to allay her fears, and to assuage her grief, not allowing her for a moment to indulge in the thought that anything

had happened to prevent Mr. Berry from returning home, beyond the state of the weather and the darkness of the night, which he might have thought dangerous to face, and therefore it would be more prudent to stay in town than to risk a journey home over the hills. And as to the other things which she related, they were easily to be accounted for, from the nervous state of excitement which over anxiety and disappointment had produced. This wise counsel had a soothing effect in the mind of Mrs. Berry, and enabled them to discuss together plans which must be adopted if no tidings reached them by a given time. But they decided to keep the matter a strict secret as long as they could, and not let the neighbours know anything about the cause of their anxiety.

The hour had now arrived; the old faithful servant was sent for, and taken into their confidence, and commissioned to start for Yew-Town in search of his master, and to explore the mystery of his prolonged absence from his home.





# CHAPTER XVIII.

### HEAVY TIDINGS.

became greatly excited. She fancied she heard the galloping of a horse in the distance, on the Yew-Town Road, coming towards Clunville. She also thought that the sound resembled the click of old Bess, and that Mr. Berry would in a few minutes be at home. This was a bright and happy thought—a thought worthy of a noble nature like hers. But is it a reality or only a delusion? Let us wait a little, then we shall see. For the present it is a ray of light shot athwart the darkness, and the heart clings to it, and "In hope, against all human hope, self desperate, will believe."

In such a crisis moments seem to expand into hours. The little group is all excitement, and

rush down the garden to wait for horse and rider turning the bend in the road. Another moment will solve the mystery—the agony of suspense will then be over. Yes, there they come! Surely something strange must have happened, for the horse has been ridden at a frightful pace, as its coating of dirt, with its sweating and breathing, indicate. On seeing Bess mounted by a strange rider, Mrs. Berry broke loose from her friend, Mrs. Rich-Man, and daughter, and rushed up the road, wild with terror, to meet the stranger, and, seizing the bridle, she imploringly asked for an explanation. The stranger was taken by surprise, if not paralyzed with fear, by such an unexpected reception on his entering the village. It might have reminded him of the Gadarene. He knew he was the bearer of heavy tidings, specially to one particular family, and the matter had occupied his thoughts the whole of the journey-how best to make his business known to her to whom he was sent. He felt anxious that the news should be broken to Mrs. Berry in as delicate a manner as possible. The plan which he considered the best was, to call on some respectable residents and consult with them, in the first place, and

request their intervention, and for them to break the news in as tender a way as possible. the singular co-incident that Mrs. Berry should be the first person he saw, made it difficult to carry out his original plan; more especially as she earnestly requested an answer to her enquir-"Where is my husband? Pray tell me if there is anything the matter? How is it he has not come home himself? I hope it is nothing serious. Pray, my good man, don't deceive me, let me know the worst, is he among the living or the dead?" To have kept her longer in suspense would have been mistaken kindness, though the answer would be painful in its effect, especially on the public road. The stranger answered, "I have come to bring the news that Mr. Berry, the maltster, is dead." He would have continued to give full particulars, but he has said enough. "He is dead," was like a shot fired from a cannon. One long drawn sigh, a heavy groan, a wild shriek, told the sad tale of a broken heart, and that the mind had given way.

The scene was painful in the extreme, and soon attracted to the spot most of the people in the village to witness the distressing sight, and to learn from the stranger the particulars of

poor Berry's sad end. The news spread through the neighbourhood like fire, while the painful nature of his sad fate produced a profound sensation, which lives in the memory of some even to the present day.

And now what is the moral of this sad village scene? Is it one that stands alone in its tragic aspects? No, not by any means. There is scarcely a village or hamlet in the country but could record scenes as painful, and even more horrifying if wrought out in detail. follow in the track of drink is to follow the path of the fell destroyer. And what is most to be deplored is, that the curse falls heaviest on the innocent and helpless—on the wives and children of drunken husbands and fathers. Such are the sufferers, as well as the drunkards themselves. who become the victims of a traffic which is rightly characterized as the nation's curse. And the question we ask is, should not the Church of Christ bestir herself to rid the country of such a gigantic evil as the drinking customs have become, and use her influence to. sweep from our midst the public house nuisance, out of which the evil springs?



## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE TRAGIC END.

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."—Proverbs xxiii, 29—35.

OW strikingly illustrative are these words of the case we are describing! The reader will remember that we parted company with our friend at midnight, when in a terrible state of excitement, judging from his wild and incoherent utterances about his "wife," and "going home."

The party with which he had spent the night had continued their excesses till a late hour, when they separated, and, as the event proved, some of them never to meet again. Little indeed did any one of them think that that night's carousal was going to be signalized by such a painful calamity, and that the preacher's last text was, in his own death, to receive such an awful and thrilling illustration.

After the party had separated, the inmates retired to rest, our friend being one of their number; the servant maid alone remaining behind to straighten up the house. In the pursuit of her domestic duties, by some strange fatality, she set fire to a barrel of pitch, which filled the house with flames and smoke, she narrowly escaping with her own life; while the wind carried the flames to the bed rooms where the landlord, hostler, and stranger had retired to rest, all under the stupifying influence of drink. And as they were incapable of making any effort to save themselves, all three perished

before help could reach them; while the female inmates were saved even as by fire.

It was about one o'clock in the morning when the fire broke out. The darkness and stillness of the hour contributed to the impressiveness of the terrible tragedy which was then being enacted; while the wild and frantic cries of the terrified females rushing through the scorching flames and blinding smoke to save their lives, awakened their neighbours from their peaceful slumbers to apprehend the danger of ther perilous position, and to make good their escape. At the same time the wind was wantonly sporting with the flames, and tossing the sparks into the air, which cast a lurid light into the surrounding darkness, as if fireworks were going off; while the startling cry of "fire!" spread to different parts of the town, bringing men and women from their beds to witness the sad calamity, and to render help to those who were heroically fighting a noble and disinterested battle with the raging flames, which threatened utter destruction to "The Queen's Head,"-the very place which little more than an hour before was ringing with boisterous mirth and insane revelry. How changed the scene, how terrible the contrast, even such as to fill every mind with horror! Not because the temple of Bacchus was in flames; no! but because three human beings had perished in the sad catastrophe, and their charred and blackened remains were among the ghastly relics rescued from the debris of the smouldering wreck.

By day-break the news had spread over the town, and even as far as to some of the adjoining villages. And what wonder if in the course of the day news of such a startling character induced thousands, either from curiosity or sympathy, to witness the site of the calamity, and also to realise in a manner more forcible than under ordinary circumstances, the terrible evils of intemperance, and the gigantic curse that the traffic in drink inflicts, not only on society, but on the families and individuals whose daily life and interests are bound up with the prosperity of such a wretched and perilous business.

It is not for us to sit in judgment on these unfortunate men—the victims of drink, and as in this case of a terrible calamity also—by supposing them to have been sinners above other

men; no! but rather to be warned by their sad end of the dangers that are associated with our drinking customs, and with the social glass; and to give up at once and for ever the intoxicating cup, and flee from it as we would from the face of a deadly serpent, and by example and precept live to illustrate the wisdom there is in shunning the danger, and the joy there is in setting a safe example for others—the example of total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating drinks, and urging others, not only for their own personal safety to adopt the principle, but to do it in the interest of humanity, morality, and religion.





### CHAPTER XX.

#### THE TWO VERDICTS.

HE verdict found at the inquest was, that the fire originated by accident, and that the deceased had come to their death by suffocation. This no doubt was true as a bare matter of fact, and was the only question the jury had before them to found their verdict on. But placing the matter before a moral court—our readers constituting that court—we shall ask them to consider antecedent causes, as well as the direct and the immediate; and with these facts and particulars, as given in evidence in the pages of "The Village Tragedy," will not the following be the summing up:-"Died from suffocation, clearly traceable to the ruinous effects of drink?" The widence having proved conclusively that one of the unhappy victims would have been at his own home had he not yielded to the temptation to drink; while it is also reasonable to conclude that if the house had closed in proper time, say eight instead of twelve o'clock, no accident would have occurred, at least from the cause assigned, therefore no lives would have been sacrificed. And still further, if the unfortunate individuals had been sober and free from the effects of drink when they retired to rest, they would have been as well able to have effected their escape as the female inmates, on the alarm of fire being raised. Therefore the verdict of the court is, "That fire was the instrumental cause of the sad calamity, but at the same time there is strong presumptive evidence leading to the conclusion that the real cause was drink, both as to the origin of the fire and the loss of life."

With this decision we think our readers will agree as the one most in accord with the real facts of the case; while at the same time it serves to show how fallacious the statistics as to the causes of death must be, and also how desirable, if such an achievement were possible, to have correct returns made. But this, we fear, is too great a task for man, with his limited powers, to accomplish. For to trace the effects

of drink through all its hidden and mysterious workings to its bitter and terrible end, would require nothing short of super-human power. Yet if such a tracking were possible, we believe the destruction of human life would be found so gigantic and appalling that it would be a heavy tax on our faith to grasp the startling reality. But such returns, whatever they may be, say if you like only, as an approximation, one hundred thousand or upwards. numbers should be published and emblazoned as a warning in the most conspicuous manner possible, on every sign board, and inside and outside every place that the law licenses for the sale of drinks which slaughter the innocent at the rate of so many thousands annually. contemplating this frightful loss of human life, it should not be forgotten that the use of alcoholic drinks confers but a questionable benefit on society under any circumstances, whilst the evils inflicted by their use is so great that all who have the happiness and welfare of their fellow-creatures at heart should unite in every effort and enterprise that is put forth to rid the nation of such a withering and desolating curse.

Physicians of the highest attainment in their

profession are agreed that not only is there no benefit to be derived from the use of alcoholic drinks, but even the moderate use becomes a positive injury to the human system. " Such liquors are not to be regarded in any sense as a nourishing article of diet, but that the daily use of them lays the foundation of many dangerous and afflictive maladies; and that the entire disuse of them, except under medical direction, would materially improve the health and augment the comfort of the community." Such is the verdict recorded by the medical profession on the use of alcoholic drinks. was recorded nearly fifty years ago, and has proved true to the correct finding of science and experience ever since. But though the verdict has been passed, public opinion has not endorsed it, else our country would have freed itself from the terrible evils which the drink constantly inflicts; nor has there been any diminution in the use of these poisonous and ruinous beverages since that time, but a large increase; so large that the sum spent in them would be incredible if the question were not placed beyond all doubt by the government returns. Who, we ask, could believe that over £140,000,000, were spent

annually in the united kingdom in intoxicating drinks, if we had not official authority for saying so? And this at a time when the nation has been passing through a commercial crisis and depression of trade, with scarcely a parallel in the memory of the present generation—while South Wales, and many parts of the mining communities of the country, have been in a state of starvation. Yet one hundred and eighty five thousand places are licensed to pauperise and demoralise the community by manufacturing one million, two hundred and eighty one thousand paupers, and sending an army of vagrants of some half a million strong over the country ripe for any evil work, besides crowding our prisons, lunatic asylums, hospitals and refuges, sending scores to the gallows every year, robbing the Church of some of her best and noblest ornaments, and throwing obstacles across the path, which prevent multitudes from swelling the ranks of those who are travelling Zionward. Let drink have full credit and justice done to it for all the terrible evils it inflicts on society, and let all the moral strength of the nation rise in its majesty and might to fight to the death this deadly foe.



# CHAPTER XXI.

#### THE CLOSING SCENE.

FTER the inquest the remains of our friend were conveyed to his home by the road on which he he had travelled in the vigour and pride of manhood a few days before, on that much dreaded journey which he persisted in taking against the affectionate appeals and earnest entreaties of wife and daughter; the result of which proved the terrible correctness of those dreams and dark forebodings which had haunted their minds for some time previous to the sad calamity.

The corpse was interred in the Parish Church yard, and followed to the grave by a goodly number of neighbours and friends. Among those assembled were some who had come from different parts of the circuit—friends with

i

whom he had laboured in Christian work in his better and happier days. And others among the mourners were those who had derived spiritual good from his preaching, or to whom he had been a friend and rendered help in the time of need. His death had created a profound sensation among all classes where he was known. And in the presence of the great mystery his failings were forgotten by friend and foe alike. While a strong feeling of Christian sorrow and sympathy was manifested by the group of friends who had gathered around the open grave to listen to the burial service which makes no distinction, but treats saints and sinners alike, with the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life. The good Clergyman, in the spirit of his Master, availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the solemn occasion in addressing words of counsel and warning, and in exhorting his hearers to take heed unto themselves, lest at any time their hearts should be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and death find them in an unprepared state to stand before the Son of Man

The funeral service was rendered still more

solemn and impressive to those present from the fact that just at the close of the minister's address, a thunderstorm, as sudden as it was startling, burst on the spectators as they stood at the grave. The darkness of the storm was pierced at intervals by the fierceness and vividness of the lightning's flash. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." And on this mournful occasion the disturbed elements burst into fury, and discharged their contents upon the mourners as they stood around the grave, giving apparent significance and impressiveness to the last scene in this broken and marred life, for the purpose, it might be, of warning others against the sin which led to consequences so painful and sad.

Here our story ends, and if it had not been for the drink, "which biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder," how different the record of his life would have been. For among the probable things of Providence, we might have expected to have had our friend in the land of the living, healthy and strong, active and brave, in the possession of all his faculties, rich in wisdom, accumulated from the experience of the teaching of life. Bright and happy, pre-

pared for leaving the world or for continuing in it. Standing on the advanced summit of the threescore years and ten; and from this high vantage ground reviewing the journey, and, with a grateful heart, exclaiming, "Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Respected and trusted by neighbour and friend, his hoary head his crown of glory, because found in the way of righteousness. the Church looked upon as a father and bishop, whose upright life and faithful preaching had turned many to righteousness; while sons and daughters of God's right hand planting revered his name, and welcomed his presence at every station in the circuit. How calm! how peaceful! and yet how bright and glorious for life to end with memories full of the mercies of the past, and with evident tokens of a well-spent life, gathering round the setting sun, and all pointing to the glorious future. Would for our friend's sake he had followed on to have known the Lord, and proved "faithful unto death." Then the picture we have sketched would have been for him a grand reality. His name would have been handed down to posterity as one of a

noble band of men who laboured hard and disinterestedly to promote the spiritual welfare of bis fellow-men. For of those who have turned many to righteousness it is written, "they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

"Labours of good to man,
Unpublished charity, unbroken faith—
Love, that 'midst grief began,
And grew with years, and faltered not in death.

"They have not perished—no!

Kind words, remembered voices once so sweet,

Smiles, radiant long ago,

And features, the great soul's apparent seat,

"All shall come back, each tie
Of pure affection shall be knit again;
Alone shall evil die,
And sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.





## CHAPTER XXII.

#### THE HOME WRECKED.

ET us now gather up and present a few reminiscences which suggest themselves in connection with our parrative of "The Village Tragedy." We will begin at the home, which, at one time, had been the centre of domestic joy and happiness through many years of married life, where christian hospitality had been practised from principle, and not for show. It was a home where real friendships were formed, which increased in strength as the years rolled on. But it became also a home where anxious care found a lodgment, and where fear that hath torment shadowed forth an approaching calamity, which came at last in a manner as strange as it was mysterious, and as sudden as it was awful and painful to contemplate.

It would have been well for Mrs. Berry had

her troubles ended with the loss of her husband. and if she could have buried them with him in his grave; but unfortunately for her such was not the case. For in the midst of her domestic sorrow and affliction, troubles of another kind threatened to overwhelm her. These troubles came like a desolating flood, with a force that was crushing and ruinous. For scarcely had the grave closed over the mortal remains of her husband, when the creditors, like a pack of hungry wolves from the mountains, fell on the carcase of her worldly effects, and the estate was soon eaten up by the professionals who put in creditor's claims. These men ply their special vocation with such perfection, that as a rule little is left for paying debts after passing through such a wonderful process of adjustment. And this case was no exception to the general rule; for the home was sold, and widow and daughter thrown on the world without a home or the means of subsistence.

This painful condition of things had been brought about, as the reader will recollect, by the rash and imprudent act of her deceased husband, who entangled himself and his affairs in the malt-making trade. This business he

had to work from the first with borrowed capital, therefore he was never free from the perils and dangers to which those are exposed who trade on borrowed money, for which a rate of interest is charged in proportion to the risk that the money lender runs in securing himself against loss with shaky customers; and in most cases borrowers are in desperate circumstances who apply to bill discounters for accommodation or advances, and consequently must submit to conditions which are as humiliating as they are galling, and, as a rule, in the end ruinous.

Having placed himself in such a position, it was absolutely necessary for him, under all circumstances, no matter what the temptation, to stand firm to his temperance pledge. In this was his temporal salvation, For by standing firm to his principles, there was the possibility of making his business a success, as his predecessor had done; and then at his decease his wife and daughter might have been as amply provided for as the relic of the former. But, alas for him and his family, drink is no respecter of persons—it wrought his ruin, and theirs in his; it has been the ruin of thousands of families before their time, and since. The same

dreadful havoc is still going on, levelling downwards instead of upwards; bringing down the affluent and mighty from their seats to beggary, starvation, and death.

Of course some of the creditors had hearts to feel for the widow and the fatherless in their trouble and sorrow, and did not even present their claims. It may be that they took it into their kind consideration that as the great debt of nature had been discharged, all minor matters might very properly be included in that great weighty transaction.

It was but little that could be saved from the general wreck, after a hunting up process had been gone through in making out the catalogue of the sale, for everything was supposed to have passed under the auctioneer's hammer. But generous friends rallied round them in their trouble, and provided them with a humble home as long as the widow needed one. This was done out of respect to him, who, at one time, had lived a honourable and useful life, and who had laboured hard to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of his fellow-men.

It was only for a few years that poor Mrs. Berry wanted a home. Her nervous system

never recovered the terrible shock it received when she met the messenger, the bearer of the heavy tidings of her husband's death, in the road.

Naturally she was a high-spirited and nobleminded woman, but her life, from this sad hour to its close, passed under a cloud, with only occasional intervals of light and hope. A living wreck of her former self, an innocent victim on whom the withering and blasting curse of the effects of drink had fallen.

"Not by the rock, or the winds, or the sea,
Was this awful ruin wrought;
O fiery Spirit, it was by thee,
Who bringest man's skill to nought!
It was thou, with thy cup of malignant power,
More dire than Circe's spell,
Changing God's image, in one short hour,
Into a fiend of hell.

"Thou didst it—enslaver of man's free will!
Thou—kindler of deadly strife!
Thou—his betrayer to every ill!
Thou—foe of his better life!
Many the wrecks thou hast made on the sea!
More hast thou made on the land!
With a sorrowful sigh we see them lie
Around us on every hand.

"The wrecks of age and of youth are there,
And of manhood by thee beguiled,
The wreck of woman, once pure and fair,
And the wreck of the little child.
The wreck of home comfort, the wreck of wealth,
The wreck of learning and fame,
The wreck of reason, the wreck of health,
And the wreck of an honoured name.

"Wrecks on the surface, drifting by,
As over life's sea we go,—
But who shall number the wrecks that lie
In the awful depths below?
Who can count those wrecks of the soul,
Gathering by thousands there,
Year by year in that realm of fear
Where dwell remorse and despair?

"How long, O man, wilt thou mourn the ill,
Yet fail its cause to trace?
And give to thy brother's murderer still
In thy home a cherished place?
Alas! for the heart that will not know—
For the eyes that will not see—
That the power that worketh another's woe
Can be no true friend to thee!"

A. L. Westcombe.





### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### THE ONLY CHILD.

N the former part of this narrative we have said that a little stranger came in course of time, and she an only child, who grew up to witness her father's chequered history and painful end.

This only child soon became the idol of the home, for by nature she was richly endowed with noble qualities of head and heart, being nurtured in a Christian home—a home in which preachers, both travelling and local, were always welcome when planned in the village, or passing through it to other stations in the circuit—a home which the poor toil-worn preachers rightly styled "the Pilgrim's Rest." And there can be no doubt but the visits and prayers of these pious visitors exerted a wonderful influence for good on her succeptible nature.

From a child she had been taught to read and prize the Scriptures, and from the study of their sacred contents at an early age she had become wise unto salvation, through the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And though young, her youth was no barrier against her being received as a member of society in the village Church—the same Church of which her parents were also members. Her gift in prayer was remarkable in one so young; while her attainment in Scriptural knowledge and Christian experience seemed to be in advance of many of riper years.

Such talents and qualifications were not lost sight of by the officials of the circuit. Her consent was sought and obtained to have her name placed on the preachers' plan. In the capacity of a local preacher her abilities soon won for her a foremost position among the preachers in the circuit, while her fame as an eloquent preacher spread into the neighbouring circuits, where her services were in constant request, and highly appreciated by all classes of hearers. Her popularity stood even higher than her father's, when in his best and palmy days.

Of course we are not saying that the novelty

of a young lady announced to appear in the pulpit might not have been a great power of attraction in drawing crowds to see and hear one of the female sex in a position as conspicuous as it was solemn. Nor do we forget, on the other hand, that old standing prejudices in the minds of some might have kept them away; fearing lest their presence at such meetings might be considered as giving countenance to bold innovation and unseemly irregularities, especially since "Paul" has been quoted by some to prove "that a woman should keep silence in the Church."

About the propriety or impropriety of the scriptural right or otherwise of women we stay not to discuss, believing that this question, with many more, will be viewed in the right light with the progress and advancement of the race. Then it will be seen and admitted that to whom God gives the preaching power and teaching gift, whether male or female, no one will be presumptuous enough to raise the question of the right as to the exercise of that gift, or quote the apostle Paul as an authority for prohibition.

The rule of common sense applied in such a case might be useful even now to set the matter

in the right light. The cat that catches most mice must certainly be the best, irrespective of breed or colour. The doctor that cures the greatest number of patients must be the best, whether he practices on the old orthodox principle of allopathy, or on the more modern principle of homeopathy, or yet on the botanical system, which both ignore and look upon as quackery; while to each we apply the same test, and give our preference to that system which produces the best results, which cures the greatest number of patients in the shortest time and at the least expense. He who prolongs life by his skill, baffles death and disappoints the grave of its prey, is the doctor we prefer so long as we believe in the healing art.

And so in regard to preachers and preaching. That is the right sort of preaching which comes nearest to the end which Infinite wisdom designed it to accomplish. And those are the best preachers who get the greatest number of sinners converted to God; who are most successful in turning many to righteousness; who teach men and women to live purely, peaceably, usefully, and themselves live unselfish and Christ-like lives. Such preachers, whether male or female, are doing

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the noblest work for God and humanity, and are most entitled to wear the crown of pre-eminence in the Church, and to be held in highest esteem for their works' sake.

The career of usefulness which we have described did not extend over many years. We write on reliable testimony that her Christian character and influence kept pace with her growing popularity, and remained untarnished to the end. Her settlement in life with a small country farmer abridged her time for public work, which, previous to her marriage, she had freely given to the preaching of the gospel on an extensive scale, which heavily taxed her physical and mental energies. mestic duties, besides a young family to nurse and provide for, and a constitution rapidly breaking up, brought her public and useful life in the Church to a close. Nor was she spared long to her family, to guide by her counsel, to influence by her example, to bless by her prayers, nor to cheer by her presence. those she dearly loved. Death had marked her for his victim before she had reached the middle of life. And now it is some years since father, mother, and "only child"—a once happy

and united family, but with a sad and sorrowful history—were laid side by side in the quiet country Churchyard, where they sleep on in the unbroken slumbers of death. A plain head-stone marks the spot where any reader of the "Village Tragedy" may find the graves, if friendship or curiosity should prompt the desire to do so.





# CHAPTER XXIV.

#### THE TWO LIVES CONTRASTED.

TROM of old it hath been written that "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Thus showing the unchanging principle of moral law, throughout all time, as well as through all the changing vicissitudes of human life, so long as moral rectitude is the guiding star. This truth will be seen strikingly illustrated in the history of the young man we introduced to our reader in the former pages of our narrative, as one who acted on the Christian principle of self-denial. in the hope of preventing his weaker brother from becoming the victim of vicious and degrading habits; a brief outline of whose life we will now place before the reader.

About sixty years of a nation's history has

been written since the subject of this sketch was born to take his part as one of the actors on life's busy stage. Of his parentage we need only remark that they belonged to the working class—the class to whom we are indebted for cultivating our soil; planting our fields; sowing our seeds; reaping and gathering our harvests; delving into the bowels of the earth after its mineral wealth; who drive tunnels through our rocks; make our railroads; build our bridges; man our navies; navigate the seas; fight our battles; protect our commerce; defend our colonies; develop our national resources; and who form the bone and sinew of a nation's strength and glory.

The cottage in which he was born lies in an out of the way place. The habits and customs of the few people who are to be met with in the locality have scarcely been affected by the progress and innovations of the age. For railroads and telegraphs have but slightly encroached on their primitive mode of existence.

The reader will not be surprised to find that in such a locality no provision for the education of poor children existed within any reasonable distance for children to walk to reach schools of any kind. Nor had the Sunday School, as an institution, reached so far with its light and influence to pierce and scatter the moral darkness that hung like a November fog, with its chilling influence, over a great part of the country. Nor indeed at the time we refer to, was education considered necessary, or looked upon in the light of a blessing. Some considered it rather as a curse; giving as a reason that learning would make the working classes dissatisfied with their station in life, and unfit them for the position Providence intended them to occupy. What a contrast between those times and the present! Now the popular cry of the Statesman and Philanthropist is, "A National system of Education." An education that shall embrace every child, no matter how low down in the social scale its position may be. Education is now to be the heritage and birth-right of every poor child, made secure by the law of the land, and paid for out of the rates, or from the imperial revenue of the nation, if poverty should stand as a barrier in the way. Now we have the Minister of the Educational Department asking the Parliament to vote a sum of more than a million and a half of money for educational purposes, and not to educate the well-todo people, but the children of the poor and labouring classes.

The subject of this sketch was sent to a farm house to work for his living, when he ought to have been in a school, obtaining useful information to fit him for the duties of life. Thus he grew up into life without having received any education from Dame, Day, or Sunday School; while his surroundings in life had strongly developed the wayward tendencies of his nature.

It was at this critical period of his history, when about eighteen, that a circumstance took place which eventually changed the course of his life.

A Methodist preacher visited the neighbourhood where he resided, and curiosity prompted him, with some of his companions, to gather round the preacher, and to listen to what he had to say. Some of the seed fell among thorns and in stony places, but the good seed found a lodgment in his heart, the growth of which in time appeared in changed habits and in a reformed life.

The spiritual awakening which he had expe-

rienced brought him to realize his great want of education, which in his case had been as much neglected as that of the wild colt in his master's field, while his thirst for knowledge and desire to possess it, were as keen as his felt hunger after spiritual food.

His faith in the possibilities of life nerved him to face courageously the difficulties of his position, and to antedate a triumph over them. The "fear of the Lord" being with him, "the beginning of wisdom," he persevered till he could read the best of books.

Finding himself in the midst of circumstances unfavourable for self-improvement or religious growth, he had to commune with God in the hay-loft, or in the open fields; and often, while following the occupation of cowherd or ploughman, was his heart musing on things above, whilst a guiding Providence was watching over him, training him for other work than following the plough or feeding the herd in the fold. First, out of his small earnings, he saved money enough to apprentice himself to learn a trade, in order that he might secure the Sabbath day for himself, free from the encroachments of labour connected with farm-house service, and

also that he might devote himself fully on the Sunday to religious work and evangelistic labours in the neighbourhood where he had gone to reside.

Having accomplished this object, his altered circumstances gave him greater opportunities for improving his mind, and a wider scope for the exercise of his talents in Christian work, while the influence of his character and usefulness were felt for good by many with whom he was brought into contact, as seen in the account of the religious awakening which took place in the village in which he resided, the particulars of which we have before narrated.

In course of time the Church with which he stood identified saw that he possessed gifts and qualifications, which in their judgment justified them in giving him a call to the full work of the ministry. To this call he tremblingly responded, fully recognizing the importance of the work and the weighty responsibilities connected therewith. Nor was he blind to his defective education for such a task that lay before him, but he believed that the path of duty was the path of safety, and the right path for honest and earnest men to pursue. It is now hard

upon forty years since he left his secular pursuits to preach the gospel. And judging from his success in the ministry, he has no cause to repent of the choice then made. For now in the autumn of his life, with his once black and curly hair turned grey, "he holds on his way rejoicing as a good minister of Jesus Christ," being held in high esteem by his brethren in the ministry, and greatly beloved by the societies in all the important circuits in which he has laboured. Thus having made full proof of his ministry, his life shows a striking contrast to that of his friend, the companion of his youth, who, while in the prime of manhood, perished with others in a drunken debauch. On other points of contrast we need not expatiate, as the reader will find them in the narrative. they may suggest many useful lessons worthy of serious consideration.

It may possibly happen in the chapter of accidents that some—but one in particular—may meet with this sketch, and on reading discover that the writer, without their knowledge or consent, had worked up materials which their own lives might have furnished. If so, fact is still stranger than fiction; for such an apparition

of a man's self standing before him in print, with many convincing proofs of real identity, may startle, if not offend, especially when the likeness does not flatter. Our sketch has not aimed at flattery, but to give the record of a useful and unselfish life, in the hope that others may be influenced on reading it, and encouraged to act on the same noble principle of self-denial, in the hope of doing a weaker brother good, as well as to illustrate the principle that firmness and consistency of character "Has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is For those who sow to the flesh to come. shall of the flesh reap corruption; but those who sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."





## CHAPTER XXV.

# THE LANDLORD'S HISTORY.

it is for those who may like to know something of his life this outline is written. But in the first place we raise a question for those to answer whom it may most concern. Is it from choice or necessity that persons identify themselves with a traffic that is so inimical to the best interests of society, and which also exposes their families to peculiar temptation.

We put this question in this form for the purpose of directing attention to the moral aspects of the trade. If from necessity persons are compelled to enter it for the sake of a living, such, in our judgment, deserve sympathy instead of censure; while from those who embark their capital in such a trade from the sole motive of

filthy lucre we withhold our sympathy, and leave them to find out that, like one of old, they have made a bad bargain, and have run a great risk of losing both body and soul.

We could easily call up a host of names, men of the mosthotorious character, whose history stands identified with the prize-ring, to whom licenses have been granted. Indeed such a position seemed to have been the goal of their ambition; and when reached, and placed at the head of a drinking establishment, the house became the resort of the worst of characters—a rendezvous for the betting and fighting fraternity—"a hell upon earth,"—a plague spot—a place to be shunned in the interests of decency, and by all who cared to maintain a reputation for respectability.

We do not wish to be understood as saying that the publicans as a class belong to the fighting and betting community, or that they are less moral and respectable than others. But what we say is, that persons with such antecedents, in the past, had little or no difficulty in obtaining a license for carrying on a traffic which has ever proved to be a social and moral curse, even when conducted under the best

regulations that could be devised. But it is gratifying to know that as a result of the temperance reformation, the appalling evils of intemperance are kept constantly before both Houses of Parliament, and the Licensing Bench of Magistrates have of late years applied a more stringent test to applicants wanting licenses, or for having them renewed; and this has done something in the right direction for improving the class of persons engaged in the trade. But unhappily for the welfare of the community, a recent discovery has been made in the Licensing Act by which a host of persons have availed themselves of the power which the law gives for selling beer to be drunk off the premises.

The landlord of the "Queen's Head" did not reach the goal of his ambition, nor win his spurs, by serving an apprenticeship to the science of self-defence. For so far as we can remember there was no bump of combativeness prominent, nor did he ever cultivate a pugnacious disposition. It was the social side of his nature which was the more fully developed, For in all places and on all occasions, where there was an opportunity, that trait of his character was brought into full play. The social circle and the drink

with him were "hail, fellow, well met." It was so with the village maltster. His weakness lay on the social side, and the only effectual safe-guard in his case was the pledge of total abstinence. The reader will remember that he was a moral hero while he marched under the temperance banner, but when that trailed in the dust he was a ruined man.

The subject of this sketch was never troubled with qualms of conscience about imposing on his appetite the restraints of self-denial for protection against the danger of excess, or from the higher motive of making his life a safe example for others to follow. He differed in this respect from those who acknowledged the supremacy of conscience, who had been brought out of nature's darkness to apprehend moral His religion consisted of and spiritual light. living a jolly life through the week, and singing psalms in the Parish Church on Sunday. this service of song with him proceeded from policy as much as from principle, for the parson happened to be brother to the squire who owned all the property in the parish, and from whom he held his takings; consequently all the parishoners were expected to attend Church, from other considerations, we fear, than those of spiritual worship—a duty which the creature owes to his Creator, on whom he is dependent for life and being.

The Sunday gatherings in the country served other purposes besides the attendance at the Church Service. They were splendid opportunities to talk over the secular affairs of the parish, to pass under review all the events, either great or small, of the past and coming week, such as sales by auction, the state of the weather, harvest prospects, the rise or fall in the markets, the askings in Church, with births, deaths, marriages, or any other item of gossip to make up the weekly budget. All these matters would have to be conned over in the Churchyard, or on the road to and from the Sunday gathering. For no matter how solemn or startling the sermon might have been, the old established custom could not be departed from. And such customs no doubt exist even to the present day in some of the old antique parishes of our country.

The "Moor Lands" could boast of one remarkable feature, greatly to its advantage, in which it contrasted favourably with most

parishes in the kingdom. Happily for the peace and sobriety of the parishioners, it had no public-house within its boundaries, neither could history or tradition furnish any proof that such a thing as a public-house ever existed in the parish, nor that any one had ever thought of availing themselves of the privilege which the law grants for the licensing of places where drunkards are manufactured. The parishioners never called a vestry meeting to discuss the desirability of having such an institution set up in their midst, nor did they attempt to make any calculation of social and moral loss the parish had suffered from the absence of the public-house institution.

In another respect it differed, perhaps to its disadvantage, with most parishes. The clergyman of that time, as we have before said, was brother to the squire who owned all the property in the parish. This gentleman in charge found great cause for personal congratulation, to which he gave expression at a Public Meeting of brother clergymen at a time when a raid had been made on dissent in the surrounding districts. He said "that he had to thank God that not a single dissenter was to be found in his parish."

This was not correct, for a good pious woman, who had kept the torch of spiritual life burning for years, living in the district, said "she knew of one who was a dissenter, and she could present him with a few more, for there were those to be found who cared little for him as a minister, or even for his Church." A parish without a public-house or a dissenter might well be held up as a remarkable phenomenon!

Such an exceptional state of things was not to last for ever. The seeds of dissent were sown, despite the vigilant care that had been taken to prevent such an untoward occurrence, and the seed sown took root and increased thirty-fold. Yet no chapel was ever allowed to be erected on the estate; if such had been the case it would have been presumptive evidence that the "Jaspers" were friends to the principle of civil and religious liberty.

But a circumstance took place far more disastrous in its effects on the social and moral interests of the parishioners than the out-growth of that form of religion which is independent of State patronage or control. The Government of that day was compelled by the necessities of the case, to find out some remedy which should

put a check upon the national vice of drunkenness, owing to the enormous consumption of gin and spirituous liquors; and as a wonderful piece of legislative sagacity, they hit on the expedient of framing and passing "The Beer-house Act." This piece of legislative folly aggravated the evil instead of abating it, which no doubt was a great disappointment to the framers of the famous act; the failure also proving the fallaciousness of the argument of those who were contending that increased facilities for the sale of malt liquors would diminish the crime of drunkenness.

This act increased the number of licensed houses by upwards of fifty thousand over the country in a few years, and the consumption of drink in proportion. During the ten years preceding the passing of the beer-house act, the quantity of malt used for brewing was 268,139,389 bushels; during the ten years following, the quantity was 344,143,550 bushels—an increase of 28 per cent. During the same periods the quantity of British spirits consumed was 57,970,963 gallons, compared with 76,797, 365 gallons—an increase of 32 per cent.

Lord Brougham, speaking of the beer-houses created by the act, after they had been in

operation a few years, said, "To what good was it that the legislature should pass laws to punish crime, or that their lordships should occupy themselves in finding out modes of improving the morals of the people by giving education? What could be the use of sowing a little seed here, and plucking up a weed there, if these beer shops were to be continued, that they might go on to sow the seeds of immorality broad cast over the land, germinating the most frightful produce that ever had been allowed to grow up in a civilized country; and, he was ashamed to add, under the fostering care of Parliament, and throwing its baleful influences over the whole community?"

Now up to the time of the passing of this act, we have said that the "Moor Lands" never had a public-house on the estate. The subject of this sketch rented a mill, with land sufficient for the keep of his horses and a few cows. But being a boozy sort of a fellow, he hit on the grand idea of becoming a jerry lord, and put over the door for his sign, in flaming letters, "THE MILL TAVERN." In this he had stolen a march on the squire. The effects of the beershop soon wrought havoc. It broke up the

peace and harmony of the neighbourhood; it sowed the seeds of discord, hatred, and strife; inflamed the passions of the young of both sexes; was the prolific source of immorality and shameless vice; and culminated the work of ruin by a shocking and fatal calamity, which sent a thrill of horror over the whole neighbourhood. Two young men had a quarrel over a trifling matter, and when under the influence of drink, they decided to settle their difference by a pugilistic encounter, in which one of the combatants, a noble youth, lost his life. melancholy event aroused the indignation of the squire, who, without any ceremony, acted on the maxim of "up with the school and down with the public-house." Thus abruptly bringing the doings of the "Mill Tavern" to a close, the miller leaving the country for the town, where he embarked the whole of his capital in the beer trade, and falling a victim to the vice which his trade produces, his life ending in the sad manner we have described in a former chapter.

The squire opened a day school on the premises where the tavern stood, for the purpose of counteracting the pernicious influence the traffic

in drink had produced. And though the estate has passed into other hands in succession, it stands without a tavern to the present day; while the young man on whose conscience the blood of his unfortunate antagonist rested sought consolation in religion, and up to the present time has lived a peaceable, sober, consistent and useful life.





# CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PUBLICAN WITH AN UNEASY CONSCIENCE.

traffickers in drink are satisfied with their lucrative profession, or that their profits, however large, are considered by them an equivalent for the sacrifice made in its acquisition. Our experience, as well as our charity, leads us to assert that there are those in the trade whose moral nature is more in harmony with honest poverty than with wealth begotten from a business to which conscience could never feel reconciled. For who are so able to judge as the publicans themselves, of the danger to which their families are exposed from the unhealthy moral atmosphere in which they are placed, and also the effects of their trade on others?

The history of the unfortunate landlord

whose tragic end we have seen, gave no indication of moral feeling, or that he ever took into account the great and awful day of, reckoning. His case stands not alone in this respect, for there are to be found those among all classes and all professions who live for the present and ignore the future. In contrast with such persons we now introduce a publican of our acquaintance, who had an uneasy conscience, but who listened to its rebukes, and gave up the traffic. He, like the miller, previous to his connection with the beer-trade rented a small farm in an adjoining parish. In moral taste he was a perfect contrast—sober, steady, industrious. a moral and religious man, a member of a Christian Church, one who engaged in Christian work, and gave of his substance for the support of the good cause. Though he possessed so many good qualities, and was remarkable for perseverance, he found farming not a remunerative business at that time.

It will be remembered by those who are conversant with the history of their country, how great the excitement was in the days of the free trade agitation, and how it swept like a mighty whirlwind over the country, and how the great landowners offered the most strenuous opposi-

tion to the advocates and champions of the free trade principles. The protectionists asserted that such revolutionary doctrines passing into law would be the ruin of the nation. and that the sun of old England's glory would set under an eclipse of darkness, from which she would never more emerge; that her former greatness and glory must be searched for in the pages of history and among the records of the past. Yet, notwithstanding all these threatened calamities, the free traders, believing in the righteousness of their cause, went forward to the fight, storming and carrying every position in which their opponents had entrenched themselves; and finally planted the banner of free trade in both Houses of Parliament. But while this political hurricane was passing over the nation, the farmers, with very few exceptions, were believers in the prophets who predicted the ruin of the country, and many of them became panic-stricken, and arranged to emigrate to some of our colonies before the catastrophe happened. The ground of their fears was not so unreasonable to any one looking at the position of things from their stand point. Farming, even under the law of protection, had been little more than a bare existence; but when the products of other countries were to be thrown on our markets, reducing the value of home produce, how were the farmers to live and pay their way, unless the rents of the farms were lowered to them in proportion to the fall in the markets? And where were the great landowners to be found, who had inaugurated such a policy among their tenantry?

This was the farmers' position at that time; and many of them, to our knowledge, in the transitional state of things were losers for a time, until their fears were allayed, and their confidence in the new order of things established.

It is interesting even at this distance of time for all parties to look back now the strife, passion, and prejudices of the political warfare of those days has passed away, to know that none of these predicted and dreadful calamities have taken place, and that those measures so much denounced, by passing into the law have proved the salvation and glory of our country, and enabled her to hold her proud pre-eminence among the nations of the earth.

It was during the time of this great agitation and upheaval in the social and political world that our friend's faith in farming failed, and that he decided to transfer his capital from the land to some other calling which presented brighter prospects of getting a living.

Farmers as a class were never known to go with the liberal party in politics, except on two questions-the abolition of tithes and Church rates. For the removal of these burdens they were agreed, and often consulted the hieroglyphics in "Old Moore's Almanack," to ascertain the precise time when these events were to take place. For "Moore" was a far greater authority with them than "The Times," or any newspaper. With public questions affecting the life of the nation they never troubled themselves. And perhaps in this they acted wisely; for to what purpose was an enlightened opinion when the farm and the vote were bound together, and must be given according to the great landowner's direction. And there were but few farmers that could afford to purchase political freedom at such a price. Yet there were some who would not sell their birth-right for any mess of pottage, no matter by whom offered, or what the penalties inflicted.

It was not from choice, but rather from neces-

sity, that our friend became the landlord of the "THREE TUNS" at Castle-Town, an old established house, with country and town trade combined. His undertaking was looked upon by himself and friends as a capital speculation. A house with a roaring trade, out of which he expected to make a fortune in a short time. The contrast between the quiet life on the farm and that of the public-house was great, but he had embarked in the business, and there was no remedy but to make himself all things to all men, and make his business a success. He soon found that he wanted a far more elastic conscience than what he had, and that conscience could not be reconciled with the effects his trade produced on the interests of society; nor could he harmonize the evils directly traceable to the traffic with the plain teaching of the Bible. For there he read "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." effects of his trade stood before his mind's eye, in the hundreds of thousands of drunkards. paupers, criminals, and lunatics, and in all the vast and expensive machinery necessary to deal with such a gigantic evil. With such facts as these before his mind and pressing on his concience, and himself raising a fortune from

such a trade, brought him to the decision to abandon it at once and for ever, and no longer to have any "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." The terrible fate of the landlord and the village maltster, who had been his intimate friends, did much in bringing his mind to this conclusion. This we know for a fact, for our friend took us into his counsel before the decision was finally made, and we did our best to deepen and strengthen the conviction; and though a quarter of a century has passed away since the lucrative business was abandoned for the quiet pursuits of husbandry. we have never heard that he has had cause to regret the steps he then took. Nor have we any reason to doubt but that he is still rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience. Well do we remember the one passage of Scripture that settled the question, when we were closeted together in a private room in the "THREE TUNS." "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Would that all would ponder this weighty question, and decide their eternal interest by accepting present loss, if need be, to secure eternal gain.



# CHAPTER XXVII.

#### CLOSING REMINISCENCES.

IT is not so long since we passed through the town—the scene of the calamity we have described. We were in a reflective mood. and as we gazed at the "Queen's Head," the facts and incidents which we have recorded passed vividly before our mind. Old memories were revived, and we seemed to live a considerable portion of life over again. We found a descendant of the ill-fated landlord's family living in the house and carrying on the business; and that the tap, from the fatal night to the present time, had never ceased to respond to the cry of the thirsty soul for "one glass Journeying on through the town a respectable resident pointed out the house where another shocking tragedy had taken place of a more recent occurrence. This was of a country

squire, who had been educated and ordained for a clergyman. When a young man he was looked upon as one of the most popular and eloquent extempore preachers of the day. He was also the author of a popular book of local interest. This gentleman, at his father's death. came into possession of the family estate. also married a lady of considerable wealth, but his gay and reckless life soon involved him and the estate in financial difficulties, out of which there was but one way of escape, the change of his heart and the reformation of his life which would follow as a natural But his gambling propensities consequence. had all but destroyed his moral power, and left him the slave of divers lusts. And he was also in the grip of a merciless class of blood-suckers; and woe be to those who find themselves placed in such circumstances. His object in coming to the town was to obtain money from his wife's friends to meet pressing demands. But in this he was bitterly disappointed. And finding his last hope gone, the agonies of remorse and the stings of conscience preyed on his mind, and it may be deprived him of the power of selfcontrol; for he went into a tradesman's shop, apparently to purchase a razor of the best Sheffield make. But to the horror of the shopman, no sooner had he placed the razor in his hands than he was on the floor, weltering in his blood, and in a few moments a lifeless corpse! Thus ended the life of one we knew in the early days of our youth—one to whom God had entrusted many talents, and placed in favourable circumstances for doing much good. But one who became the victim of a ruinous vice, and whose sad end tarnished the name he inherited.

Pursuing our journey, we arrived at the grave vard where the dead have been buried for many generations. The Church is in a state of ruin. The walls are crumbling to dust. The old tower with the roofless walls are all that remain of the old Parish Church, where the worship of God had been celebrated through many centuries. What sacred memories, what tender associations must have clustered round this once hallowed spot. How striking the change that has come over the whole scene! Instead of the worshipping congregation and the blending of human voices in prayer and praise—the Jackdaws caw and the Starlings sing. These are the creatures which have now colonized this heap of ruins, and which break the silence that would otherwise reign in this region of death. Within and around these walls are the sleeping dead. Two graves in close proximity to each other attracted our attention. They were those of two publicans who had been residents in the town. One was burnt to death, as our pages have described. The other lost his life by a savage attack from his own pigs; but why such a strange and mysterious end, we know not.

On one of the head-stones are inscribed the following admonitory texts of Scripture: "Prepare to meet thy God." "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." On the other stone the inscription sets forth the military rank once held by the landlord of the "Bell Inn," and the laurels won on the hard contested fields of Waterloo. For such a veteran who is there that would not have desired a different and more honourable end than the one described?

In an obscure corner the grave of the poor hostler was pointed out to us, but no stone stands at the head to mark the spot, or to remind the visitor to whom the dust once belonged. Close by is a tangled thicket of briars

and honey-suckles covering the spot traditionally known as "The Lovers' Graves." It appears that side by side in this place lie the bodies of two young persons who terminated their existence by a rash and suicidal act because some obstacle had interfered with their plans and passionate love for each other—their sad end forcibly illustrating the old maxim, "that true love never did run smooth."

But one tomb is conspicuous among the rest. It is strongly protected with iron railings. This tomb contains the dust of a man who was notorious in his day for his socialistic doctrine. There can be no doubt that he meant well, and laboured hard to improve the physical condition of his fellow-men. But all his schemes were Utopian, and based on false principles, both as regards sound philosophy and a correct knowledge of human nature. He ignored man's moral responsibilities, he rejected the Bible, waged a life-long war against the Christian religion, and died in extreme old age under the influence of strong delusions, which had characterized his remarkable and laborious life.

There are those still living who were believers in his doctrine, and who laboured with him in his efforts to propogate his Utopian schemes, and who respect his memory, from the fact that from different parts of Europe and America persons of distinction not unfrequently visit the grave of "RORERT OWEN, the Philanthropist."

We have no intention to speak disparagingly of the dead, especially of one whose energy and perseverance had built up a large fortune, and who, if he had felt disposed, might have gone on increasing it to an indefinite extent, and lived in princely splendour, and died a millionare—but who chose to relinquish his lucrative business, and who devoted himself and his wealth to work out schemes in which he believed consisted the perfection of human happiness. Such a character must stand out clear as the sun at noonday from the charge of selfishness, yet not of vanity and egotism,—for in this, if we read his life aright, he excelled beyond measure.

Surely such a life has lessons to teach, from which others may profit. In the first place, how conspicuous the failures of all his fine-spun theories and dreams of human happiness, when such were reduced to a practical test. And why did his schemes turn out such miserable abortions? Simply because they were contrary

to human experience, and in contradiction to the fundamental laws of man's complex nature. Man is, after all, more than an animal, and will ever want something more than the stalled ox, however well it may be fed, to meet the hunger of his moral nature. And no matter what the surroundings of physical comfort man may have, the soul "crieth out for God, yea for the living God." To this cry the high priest of Socialism had no answer to give, (unless it was a blank denial,) nor any provision in his system to meet the terrible craving of the human heart after a higher and nobler life. No wonder, then, at the collapse of such a system which was, at its best, of the "earth, earthy." But the Gospel meets this want in "the Second Man the Lord from heaven,"—a true human sympathising brother, for to those who cry to Him, "Lord, show us the Father," His answer is, "He that hath seen Me. hath seen the Father." And to such as hunger and thirst after spiritnal food, He says, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst: and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son

and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." This, we assert, is the Gospel that meets the wants of man, and will stand his friend when everything else fails, and is better adapted than all the systems of human inventions to promote the welfare and happiness of the human race. It guides man through all the perplexities that encompass his earthly lot. It cheers and sustains the mind under the burdens, the sorrows and bereavements of life. It robs death of its sting, and the grave of its terror. It points to "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"—such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard of the things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Seeing then that the Christian's hope is not a myth, but a grand reality, let us endeavour to illustrate the principles of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ in our life. And let us help forward every effort and enterprise that has for its object and end the extension of Christ's kingdom among men.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Life leads to one dark spot—the grave;
And though the path be strew'd with roses,
Or moaning yew-trees o'er it wave,
What boots it when the daylight closes?

What even if through the dubious gloom
Of centuries, men point and say,
"The mouldering bones, in yonder tomb,
Once held high rank with honour'd clay,—
I think scarce rivall'd at that day!"

"Ah! we will ask no boon of fame,
No soft, luxurious path will claim;
We will not falter, will not weary,
Though difficult our way and dreary,
Though suffering rack and tempest rage;
But strive that on one living page,
The angel, stooping from above,
Against our names shall pencil—LOVE.

"Through all our frailty, darkness, weakness, We'll lift our eyes in faith and meekness, To Him who bore our suffering, And shields us with His loving wing; And while some brother man may borrow, From deed of ours surcease of sorrow, In patience labour—patient wait, Th' unfolding of the glorious gate, Remembering every thought that springs, Is freighted with eternal things."

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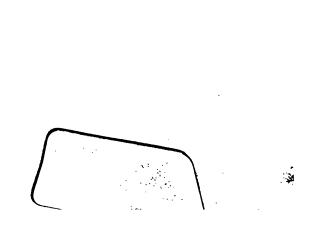
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